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Fifth Committee

16th Meeting (PM)

BUDGET COMMITTEE CONCLUDES DEBATE ON PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) this afternoon concluded its general discussion on the Secretary-General's proposals to improve the management of human resources within the Organization, including initiatives related to shortening recruitment time, implementing managed mobility, simplifying contractual arrangements and ensuring equitable geographical representation and gender balance in the Secretariat.

In closing remarks, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, Jan Beagle, said that the importance of the role played by the 30,000 United Nations personnel was not reflected in the way they were managed, and policies, procedures, and systems were needed to enable management of an integrated global workforce. She noted that the "Investing in People" report provides information on: reforms to date; their impact and rationale; authority of the central human resources function; accountability mechanisms; required changes to Staff Regulations and Rules; timelines for implementation; and related financial implications. All of those fell under the Secretary-General's purview as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization.

She said that management fully agreed with the importance of consultations with staff on human resources reform, and that never before had such proposals been discussed so extensively. To the accusation of the New York Staff Union's President that "staff representatives at [the Staff-Management Coordination Committee] are presented with finished products that leave no room for negotiation", she said it was "patently incorrect". She pointed to a number of discussions that had occurred and information

provided by her Office, and said that, from those efforts, many amendments resulted. The final proposals were agreed upon by both management and staff representatives in the Staff Management Coordination Committee last June, she said. She added that goodwill was required by all parties in use of the existing mechanisms for staff-management consultations.

In closing, she warned that a failure to dedicate resources to the mission of “investing in people” could result in greater managerial risk, loss of productivity and effectiveness from high vacancy rates, inexperienced staff, and inconsistency of standards across the Secretariat. Proper investments now could reap dividends tomorrow in a more professional, productive, and accountable Organization at the service of Member States.

Also this afternoon, Yemen’s representative took the floor, supporting the reforms of human resource management that would lead to a more equitable and fair system of recruitment from least developed countries. Her country -- a least developed country -- was little represented at the United Nations and lacked the technology that would help it in dealing with the vacancy announcements on Galaxy. She believed that it was necessary to launch a process that would keep least developed countries informed about the vacancies. That would promote the transparency and credibility of the Organization, as well as equitable geographical representation within the United Nations.

The Committee will confer on elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary bodies at 10 a.m. Friday, 3 November.