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Human Rights Council

Thirteenth session

Agenda item 2

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council*

13/1

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

The Human Rights Council,

Recalling paragraph 5 (g) of General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, in which the Assembly decided that the Council should assume the role and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights relating to the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as decided by the Assembly in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993,

Taking note of all relevant resolutions on this issue adopted by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Council,

Taking note also of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner (A/HRC/13/18),

Taking note further of the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on the follow-up to the management review of the Office of the High Commissioner (A/59/65-E/2004/48 and Add.1) and on the funding and staffing of the Office (JIU/REP/2007/8),

Bearing in mind that an imbalance in the composition of the staff could diminish the effectiveness of the work of the Office of the High Commissioner if it is perceived to be culturally biased and unrepresentative of the United Nations as a whole,

Expressing its concern that, despite the repeated requests to correct the unbalanced geographical distribution of the staff, the situation remains that one region accounts for

* The resolutions and decisions of the Human Rights Council will be contained in the report of the Council on its thirteenth session (A/HRC/13/56), chap. I.

more than half of the posts of the Office of the High Commissioner and for more posts than the four remaining regional groups combined,

Reaffirming the importance of continuing the ongoing efforts to address the imbalance regarding the regional representation of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner,

Underlining that the paramount consideration for employing staff at every level is the need for the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, and taking into account Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, expressing its conviction that this objective is compatible with the principle of equitable geographical distribution,

Reaffirming that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters,

1. *Expresses its serious concern* at the fact that, despite the measures taken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the imbalance in the geographical representation of its composition continues to be prominent, and that a single region occupies more posts in both the professional and technical categories, as well as permanent and temporary categories, than the other four regions all together;

2. *Welcomes* the statement made by the High Commissioner in her report that achieving geographical balance in the staff of her Office will remain one of her priorities, and requests the High Commissioner to continue to take all measures needed to redress the current imbalance in geographical distribution of the staff of the Office;

3. *Notes* the increase in the past three years in the percentage of staff from regions identified as requiring better representation, and the various measures proposed and already taken to address the imbalance in geographical distribution of the staff, while noting with concern the small increase in 2009 and no change in the status of the prominent region, and stresses the need to implement additional measures to redress the prominent imbalance in a more expeditious way;

4. *Takes note* of the progress achieved towards improved geographic diversity in the staff of the Office, and takes note also of the commitment of the High Commissioner to remain attentive to the need to maintain the emphasis on the broadest possible geographic diversity of her Office, as stated in the conclusion of her report;

5. *Requests* the High Commissioner to work on the broadest geographical diversity of her staff by enhancing the implementation of measures to achieve a better representation of countries and regions that are unrepresented or underrepresented, particularly from the developing world, while considering applying a zero-growth cap on the representation of countries and regions already overrepresented in the Office of the High Commissioner;

6. *Welcomes* the efforts made towards the achievement of a gender balance in the composition of the staff and the decision to continue to pay special attention to this issue;

7. *Requests* future High Commissioners to continue to enhance the ongoing efforts made in the fulfilment of the goal of a geographical balance in the composition of the staff of the Office;

8. *Underlines* the importance of continuing to promote geographical diversity in the recruitment of and promotion to high-level and Professional posts, including senior managers, as a principle of the staffing policies of the Office of the High Commissioner;

9. *Affirms* the vital importance of geographical balance in the composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner, taking into account the significance of national and regional specificities and various historic, cultural and religious backgrounds, as well as of different political, economic and legal systems, to the promotion and protection of the universality of human rights;

10. *Recalls* the provisions contained in section X, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 55/258 of 14 June 2001, on human resources management, in which the Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to increase further his efforts to improve the composition of the Secretariat by ensuring a wide and equitable geographical distribution of staff in all departments, and also recalls the request that he submit to the Assembly proposals for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges, with a view to establishing a more effective tool to ensure equitable geographical distribution in relation to the total number of staff of the Secretariat;

11. *Encourages* the General Assembly to consider further measures for promoting desirable ranges of geographical balance in the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner representing national and regional specificities and various historic, cultural and religious backgrounds, as well as the diversity of political, economic and legal systems;

12. *Welcomes* the significant increase in the human and financial resources allocated to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner and the impact it should have on the geographic composition of the Office;

13. *Recognizes* the importance of the follow-up to and implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/159 of 19 December 2006, and underlines the priority importance that the Assembly continue to provide support and guidance to the High Commissioner in the ongoing process of improvement of the geographical balance in the composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner;

14. *Requests* the High Commissioner to submit a comprehensive and updated report to the Council at its sixteenth session, in accordance with its annual programme of work, following the structure and scope of her report and with a special focus on further measures taken to correct the imbalance in the geographical composition of the staff of the Office.

*41st meeting
24 March 2010*

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 31 to 12, with 3 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Uruguay, Zambia;

Against:

Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America;

Abstaining:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Republic of Korea.]