

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF INDONESIA ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA ON THE ISSUE OF GRATIS PERSONNEL IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 19 May 1998

Madame Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the issue of Gratis Personnel.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the officer in charge for human resources management and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for introducing the reports on Gratis Personnel.

Madame Chairperson,

3. We deeply regret the late submission of reports which were to be considered in the first part of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly in accordance with Resolution 51/243. Due to the delay on the part of the Secretariat, the report of the Advisory Committee could also not be submitted in time. As a result, we have resumed consideration of this issue after the delay of about six months.

4. The Group of 77 and China firmly believes that the Secretariat of the United Nations should be composed of personnel in full accordance with the provisions of Articles 97, 100 and 101 of the Charter. The General Assembly took a decision in September 1997 to end the extraordinary practice of using the Gratis Personnel in the Organization. We look forward to and underscore full implementation of resolution 51/243 in this regard.

5. We reiterate our position that the budgets of the Organization should be submitted in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, indicating total requirements of all human and financial resources and reflecting all positions required to carry out the mandated programmes and activities.

Madame Chairperson,

6. The Group of 77 and China is of the view that all those gratis personnel who fall outside the scope of paragraphs 4 (a) and (b) of resolution 51/243 of 15 September 1997 should be phased out expeditiously. In this regard we note with concern the comments of the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 3 and 4 of its report A/52/890. The Group endorses the Advisory Committee's opinion that there should be a clearer demonstration and justification that the acceptance of Gratis Personnel meets the requisite criteria. We share the Advisory Committee's opinion that practically all functions assigned to gratis personnel referred to in the quarterly reports under consideration (A/52/709 and A/C.5/52/43) should be performed by the staff members of the United Nations, and that it is more the lack of adequate staff resources that gives rise to the acceptance of type II Gratis Personnel rather than the need for any specialized functions not available in the Secretariat or obtainable through recruitment. The Secretariat should ensure that in future this practice is not repeated, and Gratis Personnel are not accepted on the grounds of failure to recruit staff in an expeditious manner, as observed by the Advisory Committee.

7. As recommended by the ACABQ, the Secretary-General should continue to issue quarterly reports, clearly indicating the acceptance of Gratis Personnel in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 4 (a) and (b) of resolution 51/243.

Madame Chairperson,

8. As regards guidelines for acceptance of Gratis Personnel, the Group of 77 and China notes with satisfaction that the Secretariat had informed the Advisory Committee that only the Member States will be approached for providing Gratis Personnel in accordance with resolution 51/243. In this context the General Assembly should take a decision that the acceptance of Gratis Personnel in accordance with paragraph 4(a) and (b) of resolution 51/243 will be from the Member States only.

9. The Group of 77 and China appreciates the Secretary-General's plan for phasing out of Gratis Personnel contained in document A/52/710. We are of the view that the Secretariat should have planned well in advance for expeditious phasing out for Gratis Personnel after the adoption of resolution 51/243 in September 1997. The phase out plan provides for continuation of the Gratis Personnel in the Secretariat until November 1999 which is not in conformity with the resolution. We welcome the information provided by the Secretariat to the Advisory Committee that the Gratis Personnel could be phased out by the end of December 1998 if adequate resources were provided for the DPKO. We strongly support the principled position that the Secretariat should be equipped with necessary human and financial resources for carrying out its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Madame Chairperson,

10. The Group of 77 and China has taken note of Secretary-General's proposal on administrative support cost for gratis personnel contained in document A/52/823. In his view the Gratis Personnel would be accepted only in limited circumstances, therefore the charging of support cost would not seem appropriate. We have not seen any rationale in the report for the fundamental change in the Secretary-General's position contained in A/51/688 and A/51/688/Add. 1. The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its earlier position that no expenditure should be incurred from the regular budget on Gratis Personnel, in accordance with Financial Regulation 7.2 and Financial Rule 107.7. In this regard financial rules and regulations of the Organization and resolutions of the General Assembly should be respected.

11. Finally, the Group of 77 and China would like to seek clarification on the question of type II Gratis Personnel in UNSCOM. The Group seeks clarification on the observations of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 13 of its report A/52/890 about the funding of support costs for the Gratis Personnel in UNSCOM from the frozen assets or voluntary contributions. The Secretariat should clarify whether the Gratis Personnel in UNSCOM are performing the functions of purely technical and operational nature funded through voluntary contributions.

Thank you.