

**Statement by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, before the Fifth Committee on the issue of Gratis Personnel at the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**New York, 7 October 1998**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the issue of gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Chairman of the ACABQ, Ambassador Mselle, for introducing the report of the Advisory Committee (A/53/417) on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities. The Group would also like to thank the Director of the Operational Services Division, Office of Human Resources Management, Mr. Wortel, for the introduction of Secretary-General's reports A/C.5/52/56 and A/C.5/52/54/Rev.1.
3. We would like to reiterate the position of the Group of 77 and China that the Secretariat of the United Nations should comprise personnel in accordance with the provisions of Articles 97, 100 and 101 of the Charter. In this regard, the decisions of the General Assembly in its resolutions 51/243, 52/234 and 52/248 for bringing an end to the extraordinary practice of using gratis personnel should be fully implemented in letter and spirit.
4. The practice of using gratis personnel has resulted in the geographical imbalance in some departments of the Secretariat, in particular, in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which is a matter of serious concern to the Group.
5. The Group of 77 and China would also like to emphasize that the use of the gratis personnel should not be the result of poor personnel planning, and that the gratis personnel should not be a substitute for staff to be recruited against authorized positions for the implementation of mandated programmes and activities. Moreover, the gratis personnel should not be sought for positions kept vacant solely for financial reasons and the lack of adequate staff resources should not give rise to the acceptance of gratis personnel.
6. We welcome the information provided in the Secretary-General's report that the number of gratis personnel had declined from 256 in December 1997 to 175 in June 1998. However, the Group notes with concern the Advisory Committee's observations in paragraph 7 of its report (A/53/417) that the quarterly reports failed to demonstrate the extent to which all gratis personnel accepted in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provided very specialized expertise not available within the Organization, as is required in paragraph 4 (a) of resolution 51/243. In this regard we recall the statement by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee made in this Committee on 10 March 1997. The Advisory Committee regarded very specialized functions as sea and airlift for which expertise is not available in the Secretariat nor is it widely available from the majority of Member States. The Secretariat should take note of this and avoid misinterpretation of paragraph 4(a) of the General Assembly resolution 51/243.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Group of 77 and China has noted with concern the Advisory Committee's observations in paragraph 8 of its report (A/53/417) that the acceptance of gratis personnel in the International Tribunals for Rwanda and former Yugoslavia contravened the procedures and provisions contained in resolution 51/243, which does not allow acceptance of gratis personnel on the grounds of failure by the Secretariat to recruit staff in an expeditious manner.

