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## PERSONNEL

- (a) **Staffing of the Agency's Secretariat**
- (b) **Women in the Secretariat**

The summary record of the discussion in the Board of Governors on 21 September 1999 under the agenda item "Personnel" is reproduced in the Attachment.

**EXCERPT FROM THE RECORD OF THE BOARD'S 987th MEETING  
(21 September 1999)**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE FORTY-FIRST (1997) REGULAR SESSION OF THE  
GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**PERSONNEL**

- (a) STAFFING OF THE AGENCY'S SECRETARIAT  
(GOV/1999/53-GC(43)/18 (Corrected) and Corr.2)
- (b) WOMEN IN THE SECRETARIAT  
(GOV/1999/54-GC(43)/19)

Mr. GOETHEL (Director, Division of Personnel), introducing the two sub-items, said that, while the reports on staffing of the Agency's Secretariat and women in the Secretariat prepared in response to resolutions GC(41)/RES/18 and GC(41)/RES/19 covered the two-year period from 1 August 1997 to 1 August 1999, it should be borne in mind that the composition of the staff was subject to constant change.

In recruiting staff, the Secretariat adhered fully to the recruitment principles contained in Article VII.D of the Statute, in other words, the paramount consideration was to secure employees of the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity. The Statute further required that due regard be paid to the financial contributions of Member States and the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. In keeping with those principles, the Secretariat gave preference to candidates from the target groups established in the two resolutions only in cases of comparable qualifications.

The Secretariat did not apply a system of desirable ranges or quotas and its recruitment processes were guided solely by the aforementioned statutory principles. Nonetheless, since one of the two subsidiary considerations contained in Article VII.D - the financial contributions of Member States - could be quantified, the Secretariat calculated so-called pro forma figures which showed what the staffing level for each Member State would be if its scale of assessment for the Agency's Regular Budget were taken as the sole basis. The use of the scale of assessment rather than the actual contributions received was consistent with relevant United Nations system practices and United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

The pro forma calculations were set out in the Annex to document GOV/1999/53. However, they were purely indicative in nature since their rigorous application would deny a large number of Member States - those with a low scale of assessment - the possibility of being represented on the staff of the Secretariat at all and would thus run counter to the other subsidiary recruitment principle of as wide a geographical basis as possible and to the resolution calling for an increase in the staff from developing countries.

In paragraph 8 of document GOV/1999/53, reference was made to a 1998 judgement by the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization, which ruled that the Agency's government sponsorship practice was null and void and contrary to Articles VII.D and F of the Statute. That ruling was binding on the Secretariat since the Agency had accepted the jurisdiction of the ILO. Members of the Board might recall that the matter had been brought to their attention in March 1998 and in a subsequent Briefing Note by the Secretariat on Government Sponsorship dated 24 April 1998. The judgement prohibited the veto by a Member State of the proposed appointment of a candidate; it did not, however, preclude co-operation between Member States and the Secretariat in recruitment matters. Indeed, the support of Member States was necessary for disseminating vacancy notices, encouraging candidates to apply and providing information relating to the qualifications of candidates.

The report on staffing of the Agency's Secretariat covered only those staff members who were subject to the principle of geographical distribution. In accordance with United Nations system practice, the designation referred essentially to staff in the Professional and higher categories who had been appointed through standard competitive recruitment, occupied a regular post, and held a contract of one year or more. It excluded all General Service staff and, in the Professional and higher categories, linguistic staff, medical doctors in the VIC Medical Service, temporary staff and extrabudgetary staff.

On 1 August 1999, 772 posts were subject to geographical distribution, of which 81 had been vacant on that date. The 691 staff members holding posts subject to geographical distribution on that date represented 73.3% of the total staff in the Professional and higher categories in the Secretariat.

It was worth noting, however, that even in the case of staff not covered by geographical distribution, the Secretariat endeavoured to ensure wide representation. Indeed, although staff members in the General Service category were generally locally recruited, well over eighty countries were represented.

Resolution GC(41)/RES/18 established three target groups for which the Director General was requested to step up recruitment efforts: staff members from developing countries; staff members from other Member States which were unrepresented; and staff members from other Member States which were under-represented. The definition of a developing country used in the report was taken from the *World Economic and Social Survey 1998* published by the United Nations Secretariat.

The charts on pages 4 and 6 of document GOV/1999/53 showed an increase in the number of staff drawn from developing countries in both nominal and percentage terms. Fifty candidates from developing countries had been appointed during the period in question - resulting in a net increase of 19 - and the share of such countries in the staff subject to geographical distribution had reached almost one third.

The charts on pages 7 and 8 correlated three factors: applications, well-qualified candidates and selected candidates. Together they showed that the percentage share of developing countries among those selected was consistently higher than their share among those considered well qualified - an indication that the policy of giving preference to candidates from developing countries in cases of comparable qualifications was being followed.

In the case of unrepresented Member States, the number had further decreased during the two-year period covered by the report despite the increase in Agency membership from 125 to 129. Currently, 83% of all Member States were represented on the staff of the Secretariat as compared with 81% two years previously. That increase had to be compared with the low number of applications received from unrepresented countries - only 2.9% of all applications had come from that group of countries, and only 0.9% of all well-qualified candidates had come from unrepresented countries.

Turning to the under-represented countries, he said that - in the absence of quotas - the pro forma figures provided some guidance as to which countries were to be considered as under-represented. In previous reports to the Board a country was viewed as potentially under-represented if its staffing level was below a figure corresponding to 50% of its scale of assessment. While it was recognized that the 50% formula was somewhat arbitrary, there was a certain conceptual basis for it, since organizations that did apply a system of desirable ranges or quotas usually weighted the financial contributions by about 50%. On that basis, there would be five under-represented countries, namely France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland. It should be pointed out that the share of well-qualified candidates from those under-represented countries was only 9.7%, while their share among those selected was 15.9% - a further indication that in cases of comparable qualifications, candidates from under-represented countries were given preference.

The resolution on women in the Secretariat (GC(41)/RES/19) established as the ultimate goal an equal gender representation. If the entire staff of the Secretariat was taken into account, then the Agency was close to achieving that goal since at present 42.5% of the staff were women.

However, there was a disparity between the two categories of staff. While in the General Service category women were in the majority, accounting for 61.4%, they were clearly a minority in the Professional and higher categories, where they represented merely 18.5%. Document GOV/1999/54 described the actions taken to improve the level of representation of women in the Professional and higher categories.

While over the ten-year period from 1989 to 1999 the number of women in the Professional and higher categories had increased from 85 to 136 (i.e. by 60%), there had not been a significant improvement during the past two years - the number of women had increased by only five, and the percentage of women had remained at around 18%. That minimal increase did not reflect the considerable recruitment efforts made. In fact, 34 women

had been recruited over the past two years, but since 29 had left the Secretariat, the net gain was only 5.

The charts on pages 6 and 7 of the report showed that the percentage of applications received from women still stood at around 18%, and the share of women among those considered well qualified was even lower, accounting for about 14%. However, some 18 to 23% of the selected candidates were women. That again was a clear indication that in cases of comparable qualifications preference was being given to women.

On the other hand, there had been some progress regarding women in managerial and senior positions, as referred to by the Director General in his introductory statement. While in 1989 there had been only six women at grade P-5 and none above that grade, in 1999 there were 14 women at P-5 and five at D-1. More significantly, those five at D-1 included four Directors, whereas in 1997 there had been only two women Directors.

A number of measures had been taken at various levels in the Secretariat to improve the representation of women. Crucial to those efforts was the Focal Point on Gender Concerns, a function being carried out by Annick Carnino, Director of the Division of Nuclear Installation Safety, and Beverley Young, Head of the Human Resources Planning and Control Unit in the Division of Personnel. Together they had launched a number of new and interesting activities referred to in paragraph 5 of the report. One particular example was the film that had been shown earlier, which would be made available to Member States during the General Conference.

The Secretariat had made considerable efforts to implement the two General Conference resolutions and, in its view, had achieved some positive results in spite of the severe difficulties encountered in attracting candidates of the required calibre in general and from the target groups in particular. The reasons for the shortage of well-qualified candidates were manifold. The main reason was that recruitment was from a narrow sector of the global labour market - not all countries had a nuclear programme. In some cases it reflected the deterioration of employment conditions within the United Nations system. Sometimes the insecurity in employment attributed to the Agency's rotation policy deterred candidates, especially those specialists aged between 40 and 50. Moreover, as far as female candidates were concerned, the shortage of candidates reflected the shortage of women in science and technology in most Member States. The Agency was not alone - other United Nations specialized agencies had similar statistics. Moreover, there appeared to be very few women Governors - which was perhaps an indication that Member States faced similar problems in their national institutions.

There was also a disparity of candidates applying from different Member States. For instance, 19% of the applications in the two-year period had come from one single Member State; 46% of the applications from seven countries, of which four could be considered over-represented; and 65% of all applications had originated in 18 countries, of which 12 could be considered over-represented.

In conclusion, he stressed that Member States were partners in the process of the recruitment and that the combined efforts of the Secretariat and Member States were essential in order to make further progress towards implementing the resolutions.

Mr. RAHMAN HASSAN (Sudan) regretted the fact that despite all the Director General's and the Secretariat's efforts, under-representation both of women and of developing countries still persisted, and he urged the Director General to continue his efforts to find ways of overcoming that problem.

Mr. BENMOUSSA (Morocco), referring to the Annex to document GOV/1999/53 (Corrected), pointed out that the indication designating "former Member State" should have been applied to Yugoslavia, in the light of the decision taken by the Security Council and subsequently by the Board itself whereby the Former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was to be requested to resubmit its application for membership of the Agency.

Morocco appreciated the modest, but tangible progress made in improving the percentage of nationals from developing countries employed in the Professional and higher categories in the Secretariat. Morocco fully recognized that, as laid down in Article VII.B of the Statute, the Director General was responsible for the appointment of staff and, as laid down in Article VII.D, the paramount consideration in the recruitment and employment of staff was to secure employees of the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity, and that wide geographical representation was only a secondary consideration. It also recognized that the Agency's recruitment policy hitherto had enabled the Agency to enjoy the reputation of being one of the most efficient organizations in the United Nations system.

Having noted that he found it strange that the countries in the Annex to document GOV/1999/53 were listed in alphabetical order and not by geographical area, he said that he thought that the table in the Annex should be deleted because it created confusion. Contrary to Article VII.D of the Statute, the table gave the impression that the essential criterion was the scale of assessment. If that were the case, it would be impossible to improve the representation of developing countries. A country such as his own, for example, would be entitled to only 0.25% of a staff member and would have to join with other countries in order to secure even one staff member. It would also be contrary to the practice of other organizations of the United Nations system, whereby every Member State was entitled to have at least one national employed in the Secretariat.

Furthermore, although the table had been drawn up in compliance with Article VII.D of the Statute, which stated that due regard should be paid to the contributions of members to the Agency, there was no indication that "contributions" meant only mandatory contributions to the Regular Budget. As he saw it, contributions to the Technical Co-operation Fund should also be taken into account. Furthermore, the calculation should be made not on the basis of the scale of assessment but on the basis of the contributions actually paid. The Agency's scale of assessment was based on a fairly complex formula which took account of each country's capacity to pay in the light of economic and other considerations and payments should therefore be judged not in absolute, but in relative terms.

Turning to the subject of government sponsorship, he said that it was a recognized practice in intergovernmental organizations. It should be neither an obstacle to, nor a condition of, recruitment. It allowed for the Director General's prerogative in the matter to be respected, while providing a better selection of candidates. A country that sponsored a candidate provided a guarantee of that person's integrity. Moreover, the fact that the Board had accepted the competence of the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO in a particular case did not mean that it had to accept the Tribunal's ruling, and even less that the practice of government sponsorship had to be discontinued. In fact, the Board had never taken any formal decision on the matter. He agreed with the Secretariat's view of the government sponsorship practice outlined in paragraph 24 of document GOV/2876 issued in August 1996. Furthermore, since the Secretariat was not required to justify its acceptance or rejection of any particular candidate and he had never seen a letter from the Agency to a candidate indicating lack of government sponsorship as a reason for not accepting a candidate, it was difficult to understand how the Agency had been called to account before the ILOAT. There was surely a middle way between interference by Member States in micro-management and complete disregard of the role of Governments.

The fact that Article VII.G of the Statute stated that the term "staff" included guards suggested that the Secretariat's efforts should be directed towards ensuring better geographical representation among all staff not just those in the Professional and higher categories.

He believed that there were a number of ways in which the representation of developing countries within the Secretariat could be improved. The reduction of four to three months for the period during which vacancies were advertised could cause problems for some developing countries which did not yet have access to the Internet. The Secretariat should therefore continue to inform Permanent Missions of any vacancies, and the four-month notification period should be reinstated to ensure that candidates from developing countries were not penalized. Alternatively, if the Secretariat wished to speed up the recruitment process, it could inform Member States in advance of posts likely to become vacant, over the following six- or twelve-month period. It would also be useful to have the brochure entitled "A Professional Assignment for Peace and Development" translated into the other working languages. Furthermore, advantage should be taken of occasions such as regional seminars and the scientific forums held during the General Conference to publicize the conditions and criteria for staff recruitment. Lastly, he pointed out that the probation period of one year before appointments were confirmed acted as a deterrent to candidates with responsible positions in their own countries who were unwilling to take the risk of leaving secure jobs to accept employment on uncertain conditions in the Agency.

In conclusion, he reaffirmed that Morocco would continue to work in close co-operation with the Secretariat to improve the representativeness and effectiveness of the Agency.

Mr. SHOAB (Pakistan) said that, in giving preference to applicants with comparable qualifications from developing countries, care should be taken to ensure that the high standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity of the Agency's staff were not sacrificed in the process. Pakistan appreciated the gradual increase in the percentage of staff

members from developing Member States from 27.2% to 32.1% over the past 10 years, and encouraged the Secretariat to continue on that course. However, he was concerned to note that 81 out of 772 Professional posts, or 10.5%, had been vacant on the reference date of 1 August 1999. Efforts should be made to reduce that high figure by streamlining the recruitment process.

Ms. HERNES (Norway) said she appreciated the measures taken by the Secretariat to increase the number of staff members from developing and under-represented States. As a country without any representatives in the Secretariat, Norway welcomed the measures set out in paragraph 7 of document GOV/1999/53, which it hoped would improve the situation, and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its search for other initiatives in that connection. While the number of applications from unrepresented or under-represented countries was still comparatively low, she would have hoped that well-qualified candidates could have been found among them. As a country whose contributions to the Agency's budget had always been paid in full and on time, and as a loyal contributor to the Technical Co-operation Fund, Norway hoped that its efforts to be represented in the Agency's Secretariat would succeed.

With regard to the representation of women in the Secretariat, she commended the Secretariat for the high quality of the video on the subject of women in the Agency. It could be a useful instrument in recruitment efforts and the Secretariat should explore ways of distributing it more widely, since experience had shown that even the most highly qualified women often needed special encouragement to apply for posts.

Mr. SUGANUMA (Japan) said that although commendable progress had been made by the Secretariat, there was still a considerable gap between the desirable distribution of posts and the actual distribution. Based on its scale of assessment, Japan's pro forma entitlement would be 141.49 staff members, whereas the actual number of Japanese staff members in the Agency was 25. That was a very considerable discrepancy and his Government regarded it as a very serious problem.

Japan's rate of assessed contributions in recent years to most international organizations was more than 20%, a fact which had given rise to much discussion concerning its representation in those organizations. His Government was renewing its efforts to ensure that the increase in Japan's financial contributions to such bodies was paralleled by an increase in the number of its nationals employed by them. While there was no easy solution to the problem, it was important to take practical steps towards resolving it. For its part, Japan was trying to improve the system it used to disseminate information on vacancies, in order to provide access to a wider range of potential candidates.

Mr. Ki-Moon BAN (Republic of Korea) noted that the reports before the Board showed that there had been a slight increase in the percentage of staff members from developing countries in the Professional category, but a decrease at the Director and Deputy Director General level. The Secretariat had accounted for that apparent percentage decrease by stating that three staff members from developed Member States had been appointed to posts previously held by nationals from developed Member States that had been vacant on the

earlier reference date. That explanation seemed to imply that the Secretariat sought to fill vacant posts with individuals from developed Member States if they had previously been held by staff members from such States. Although qualifications and merit should be the most important factor in recruiting staff members, the Secretariat should intensify its efforts to meet the requirements of the General Conference resolutions, especially in respect of staff at the senior levels.

Ms. MXAKATO-DISEKO (South Africa) endorsed the comments made by the Governor from the Republic of Korea on the need to ensure representation of developing countries in the upper echelons of the Secretariat. She also looked forward to seeing more women above the level of P-5 in the near future. The Secretariat was to be commended for the work it had done in fulfilling the resolutions calling for improved representation of women in the Secretariat, but unless Member States took active steps to complement those efforts, progress in attracting women to the Agency would be very slow. The video on women in the Secretariat was of value in fostering a sense of ownership by all of the work of the Agency, but it could have been improved by including a diverse range of women drawn from all the regions represented in the Board. Such an approach would also enhance the Agency's recruitment efforts.

Ms. PELLICER (Mexico) said that in order to increase the number of women in the Agency, it was necessary to receive more applications from women. The fact that there were few women scientists, especially in the nuclear field, was one of the major obstacles to an increase in the recruitment of women in the Agency. Efforts to enhance awareness of the possibilities offered by employment with the Agency and to stimulate women's involvement in nuclear science were therefore very welcome.

The production of a video on women in the Secretariat was a useful initiative, but she wondered how it would be utilized in future, whether Member States would be able to acquire it, how it would be disseminated and whether it would be translated into languages other than English. Another way of promoting interest in the Secretariat among women scientists would be to produce a brochure for extremely wide distribution.

Mr. FREEMAN (United Kingdom), in taking note of the Director General's report on staffing of the Agency's Secretariat (GOV/1999/53), stressed that, as stipulated in Article VII.D of the Statute, the paramount consideration in the recruitment of staff was to secure employees of the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity.

Mr. TITKOV (Russian Federation) said that while the basic criteria for staff recruitment had to be a high level of competence and experience, government sponsorship of candidates was also of great importance. Any departure from that approach would reduce the Secretariat's effectiveness and diminish the Agency's authority. Since the start of its activities, the Agency's high level of efficiency had to a large extent been achieved by a judicious staffing policy that facilitated a regular influx from States of highly-qualified staff members who enriched the Agency with fresh ideas and extensive practical experience.

However, the Russian Federation was concerned by the trend towards making employment in the Professional category into career service. Such a trend would deprive the Agency of links with practical experience in Member States and prevent qualified specialists that had been trained by Governments for work in the Secretariat from joining the Agency. The number of long-term contracts given out was high and should be reduced to a minimum. Such an approach would enhance the flow of new candidates with up-to-date experience in nuclear industry and scientific institutions and help to conserve the high level of Professionals working in the Secretariat.

With regard to the representation of developing countries, he believed that the proposals made by the Governor from Morocco deserved serious attention. As for the representation of women in the Secretariat, he supported the Agency's efforts in that area.

Ms. QUINCY (France) commended the clarity of document GOV/1999/53 and welcomed the video on women in the Secretariat, which she hoped would be made available in additional languages in order to reach the largest possible viewing audience so that it could not only contribute to an increase in the representation of women, but also help to expand the Agency's geographical base.

Mr. SANDTNER (Germany) noted that Germany was one of the countries under-represented in the Secretariat - by nearly 50%, according to the Annex to the report in document GOV/1999/53. Of course, not all countries could be fully represented, but efforts should be made to ensure that the level of under-representation did not become too high. Tables like the one in the Annex should be included in future documents on Secretariat staffing. One could not, on the one hand, request more information and greater clarity, while rejecting useful information.

Mr. RITCH (United States of America) endorsed the remarks by the representative of the United Kingdom highlighting the relevant part of the Statute. With regard to the Director of Personnel's reference to the gender composition of the current Board membership, he objected to any insinuation that Member States of the Agency were in any way capable of hypocrisy.

The DIRECTOR GENERAL said that he was sure that the Board agreed that the Agency's staff was its most valuable asset and that its strength depended on the competence of its staff; that staff recruitment should continue to be based on objective, technical considerations and in no way be politicized; and that the provisions of the Statute should be scrupulously observed in staff management.

The Statute explicitly stated that the paramount consideration in recruitment had to be the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity. In practice, that meant that no candidate who lacked the proper qualifications was considered for a post. A list of well-qualified candidates was first drawn up and then considered with a view to giving effect to the other statutory requirements, namely that due regard had to be given to budgetary contributions and to the importance of recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

The requirements set out in General Conference resolutions also had to be met, namely increasing the number of staff from developing countries and the number of women.

The statutory requirement that due regard be given to contributions was construed to refer to assessed contributions since Article XIX.A of the Statute stated that a country in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions lost its right to vote, but not its right to have its nationals recruited and it was common knowledge that sanctions had to be interpreted in a restrictive manner. Assessed contributions were an indicative element taken into account in determining whether a country was properly represented, but that was by no means equivalent to having a quota. The Agency had no quotas, nor could it have: if financial contributions were converted into the corresponding number of staff members, 79 Member States would be entitled to less than one. That was obviously absurd. It was understood that membership in the Agency entitled countries to expect that at least one of their nationals would be a staff member, the ultimate test being, of course, competence and integrity.

He was committed to improving the representation of women in the Secretariat and was proud of the fact that since he had taken up the position of Director General the number of women Directors had increased from 2 to 4. He hoped to improve on that record, it being always understood that competence and integrity were paramount.

Staff recruitment within the Agency was based on the concept enshrined in the Statute that the staff were independent international civil servants and that they were not appointed or controlled by Governments. That was why the issue of Government sponsorship had been raised. The Administrative Tribunal of the ILO, whose jurisdiction had been accepted by the Board, had decided that Government sponsorship was in complete contradiction with Article VII.F of the Agency's Statute, which described the independence of the international civil servant. The Agency and the ITU were the only organizations in the United Nations system which had applied the practice of Government sponsorship. The abolition of Government sponsorship did not mean that the integrity and character of applicants were not scrutinized. On the contrary, in fulfilling the requirement of ensuring the highest standards of integrity and expertise among staff, the Director General had the responsibility to check the references of applicants, a process that often involved contacting Governments.

In response to the comment made by the Governor from Morocco in which he challenged the necessity for the Agency to accept the decision of the ILOAT, he said that such decisions had the character of *res judicata*, and were legally binding. Following a case in 1954 involving the United Nations, the International Court of Justice had made it clear that the United Nations General Assembly was bound to implement the decision of the Administrative Tribunal.

Another constraint on staffing decisions in the Agency was the statutory requirement of staff rotation. The Agency was unique in the United Nations system in that it was required to keep its permanent staff to a minimum in order to promote the influx of the latest scientific knowledge with the recruitment of new staff members. Permanent staff in the Professional category subject to geographical distribution had always tended to account for about 40 to

45%. That had proven useful in ensuring intellectual input and the import of fresh ideas, but it also meant that Departments lost skilled staff to rotation. For example, the previous year there had been one Deputy Director General and one Director from Switzerland. Both were no longer with the Agency, and Switzerland currently had only one staff member at the Professional level. Two years previously, two senior staff members, one at the Director level, had been from Norway, but today there were none. Such transitions were natural.

In conclusion, the recruitment process had to be fair, priority had to be given to competence and integrity and further improvements had to be made to improve geographical representation and gender balance in the Secretariat.

Mr. GOETHEL (Director, Division of Personnel) said that due note would be taken of the remark pertaining to Yugoslavia made by the Governor from Morocco. As to his question why the list of countries in the Annex to document GOV/1999/53 had been given in alphabetical order rather than by region, he said that it had been done so because the resolution referred to countries, as well as for ease of reference.

With regard to the comments made by the Governor from Morocco on Article VII.G, he said that the Article was not clear, but was generally construed as applying to security guards, who were not currently under contract with the Agency. The Statute referred to recruitment on as wide a geographical basis as possible, which was a subsidiary consideration that was applied to recruitment of staff in the Agency as a whole. However, there was a separate category of staff subject to geographical distribution, which, in line with United Nations practice, included only staff internationally recruited in the Professional and higher categories to regular posts for at least one year or more. If the principle of geographical distribution was extended to all categories, including General Service staff, that would entail international recruitment and hence heavy cost implications. Nevertheless, as he had mentioned before, a wide geographical range was sought in the General Service and other categories not subject to the principle of geographical distribution, with more than 80 different nations being currently represented in the General Service category.

As to the reduction in the time period for the announcement of vacancies, he pointed out that the change had been made in order to speed up the recruitment process since delays in recruitment had implications for programme delivery. However, the Secretariat hoped to send out a list of projected vacancies towards the end of each year, enabling Member States to begin prospecting for candidates at an earlier date and the Secretariat was prepared to work with individual Member States to see what could be done to facilitate the transmission of vacancy notices in the most efficient manner to the necessary national institutions. The recruitment brochure entitled "A Professional Assignment for Peace and Development" was currently available only in English owing to cost considerations, but an effort would be made to publish it in the Agency's other official languages in due course. With regard to the possibility of disseminating information through regional seminars and other conferences, he noted that that was part of the Agency's outreach strategy and said that the Secretariat would be glad to work with individual countries in furtherance of that strategy. As to the period of probation, the Secretariat was currently implementing the procedures approved by the Board

in 1998 and would aim to preserve transparency in those efforts so as not to deter candidates from seeking employment with the Agency.

The representative of Pakistan had mentioned the relatively high number of vacant posts on 1 August 1999. To some extent that was caused by a natural turnover resulting from resignations that could not be foreseen. Financial constraints also played a role, with some positions being kept unfilled for some time in order to achieve economies. Efforts were being made to reduce both the time frame for recruitment and the number of vacant positions. A PPAS review of the recruitment process had been carried out with a view to streamlining the process and improvements were under way.

The representative of Japan had spoken of the need to improve the Agency's outreach strategy to ensure that vacancy notices were sent to pools of potential candidates. In that effort, the Agency needed the help of Member States in signalling ways of attracting the greatest number of well-qualified candidates in individual countries. The Secretariat was prepared to work with Member States, particularly those that were under-represented to improve the situation. Two information missions had been carried out in under-represented countries in the past three years, with the cost being shared by the countries concerned and the Secretariat. The Secretariat was prepared to organize missions in other countries if requested.

The representative of the Republic of Korea had felt that a bias had been expressed by the Secretariat in favour of a system whereby a senior post occupied by a staff member from one group of countries would subsequently be filled by a candidate from the same group. That was certainly not the Secretariat's intention: its policy was strictly one of discouraging "national preserves" and of filling positions that became vacant with the best qualified candidates, while observing the widest geographical distribution possible.

In reply to the question raised by the representative of Mexico as to whether the film on women in the Secretariat would be translated into other languages, he said that the possibility was being investigated. He fully agreed that the film should be used in the Secretariat's recruitment efforts and that it should be made available to Member States for distribution in order to attract as many candidates as possible.

Finally, he assured the representative of the United States that it had certainly not been his intention to make any insinuations concerning the representation of women in the Board.

The CHAIRMAN assumed that the Board wished to take note of the information contained in documents GOV/1999/53-GC(43)/18 (Corrected and Corr.2) and GOV/1999/54-GC(43)/19.

It was so agreed.