



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/36/407/Add.1
24 November 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-sixth session
Agenda items 104 and 107

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

Application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution
of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat

Comments of the Secretary-General

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the United Nations deals essentially with a number of factors that, in its view, hinder the proper application of that principle. The purpose of the report, as stated in its introduction, was to respond to the concern expressed by many Member States regarding inadequate implementation of the General Assembly decisions on equitable geographical distribution. It is further indicated in the annual report of JIU (A/36/34, para. 12 (a) (i) that this report is related to paragraph 36 of the annex to resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system which emphasized the need to take steps to ensure that developing countries are adequately represented at the executive, management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities for development in the United Nations system.

2. The comments of the Secretary General refer to each of the factors on which the JIU report makes recommendations.

A. Appointment of nationals from over-represented countries -
Recommendations 1 and 2

3. The first factor considered by the JIU report as hindering the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution is the appointment of nationals from over-represented countries. The substantial change in the desirable ranges, resulting from the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 35/210 of 17 December 1980 reduced the number of over-represented Member States from 60 on 30 June 1980 to 30 on 30 June 1981. The population of these 30 over-represented countries, however, is more than half the total population of all Member States combined and these Member States continue to be the source of large numbers of candidates who have the qualifications needed by the Organization and who are willing to serve in the Secretariat.

4. On the other hand, one of the most important factors preventing greater progress in improving the geographical distribution of the Secretariat is the difficulty in locating qualified nationals of unrepresented or under-represented Member States who are available and interested in joining the Secretariat. There are several reasons for candidates from those countries being unable or unwilling to join the Secretariat. For nationals of some Member States, the salaries offered in the Secretariat may not be competitive when compared to those they receive in their present positions. This may be the result of the favourable economic climate of the country of which the candidate is a national or because these nationals are able to command positions of greater responsibility at an earlier stage of their career in their country than they could within the Secretariat. Other candidates, while possibly ready to join the Secretariat, may be unwilling to consider being assigned to work in some duty stations where the Organization may have more vacancies. Language and cultural considerations may move a candidate to seek employment in the national framework rather than to pursue a career as an expatriate. Furthermore, some candidates, and their Governments, are only interested in senior level posts and are unwilling to accept any post at a junior level.

5. It remains the Secretary-General's objective to give priority to the appointment of qualified candidates from unrepresented and under-represented Member States and from other Member States below the mid-point of their range to appropriate Secretariat posts when such candidates can be identified.

6. The JIU concludes this section of its report with two recommendations, the first of which is to the effect that the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be followed strictly and that it should be applied to all "entities" of the United Nations. It specifies that this term means the organizations, divisions, centres, offices, programmes, services, conferences and organizational units within the United Nations. It would have the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat show clearly each year the achievement of each entity in that respect, with the objective of bringing about equitable geographical distribution by main regions in all organizational units of the Secretariat in accordance with regional desirable ranges.

7. As stated in paragraph 4 of his report on the geographical distribution of staff (A/C.5/35/36 submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, the Secretary-General continues to believe that any system of desirable ranges established by the Assembly in accordance with the Charter principle that "due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible" must be administered "flexibly in the interest of the Organization". Every effort is being made under the recruitment plan to ensure that the choice of candidates to fill individual vacancies will take into account any regional imbalances in the distribution of the departments and offices in which the vacant posts are located. However, to require the regional distribution of posts according to the system of desirable ranges to be reflected in every organizational unit, down to the lowest level, would clearly remove the flexibility available to the Secretary-General in the operation of the services of the Secretariat for which he is responsible as the Chief Administrative Officer. It would create particular difficulties with respect to the Secretary-General's authority to assign the staff to any of the offices or activities of the Organization under staff regulation 1.2 in order to ensure the maximum efficiency in the use of the human resources of the Secretariat. In their comments, a number of heads of departments and offices, including in particular the Executive Secretaries of regional commissions, have referred to specific needs of the programmes which they are mandated to carry out and for which qualified candidates cannot be found from a number of countries that are not well represented in their organizational units. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization has welcomed the recommendation in view of its impending change of status.

8. While the Secretary-General continues to believe that the equitable geographical distribution of the staff in posts subject to geographical distribution should in principle apply to the Secretariat as a whole, he considers that care must be taken to see that no one country or group of countries predominates in any major organizational unit except in the case of the regional commissions in which a maximum of 75 per cent of the staff may be from the region. The Secretary-General considers it his responsibility, within the directives of the General Assembly with regard to the equitable geographical distribution of the Secretariat as a whole, to watch over the distribution of the staff in each of the 43 main departments and offices of the Secretariat by region, sex and age, and between the developing and developed countries.

/...

9. The second recommendation of the JIU report proposes the following measures to be implemented during the period 1982-1984 to achieve the equitable representation of Member States in the Secretariat:

"(a) At least three out of every five candidates appointed to vacant geographic posts in each entity should be nationals of unrepresented and under-represented Member States;

"(b) The remaining candidates out of the five appointed should preferably be nationals of Member States which are within their desirable ranges;

"(c) The appointment of nationals of over-represented Member States should be permitted only in exceptional cases and on the understanding that such appointments will not result in increasing the degree of over-representation of these Member States."

10. The first measure would raise to 60 per cent the target of 40 per cent of vacancies to be filled by the nationals of unrepresented and under-represented States, established by the General Assembly in resolution 33/143 of 20 December 1978 and confirmed in its resolution 35/210, and would extend the period during which this target should be in effect for two years from 1982 to 1984. At present, a total of 45 nationals of unrepresented States and 251 nationals of under-represented States would have to be appointed to bring each of these Member States to the lower limit of their desirable range. If the average number of appointments each year remains as in recent years, over 800 appointments may be expected during the years 1982, 1983 and 1984. Sixty per cent would be many more than would be required even to bring all these Member States to their mid-point, unless many of the staff of the same nationalities are separated from the service for one reason or another during the same period. In the case of the regional commissions in which the 75 per cent target has not yet been reached, the result could be to prevent further recruitment from many of the countries of their respective regions from which they are at present able to obtain the qualified staff they need to carry out their programmes.

11. This highlights one of the difficulties experienced by the Secretariat with regard to maintaining the proper representation of a number of under-represented Member States with large desirable ranges. It is particularly evident when nationals of such Member States serve primarily on fixed-term appointments. Since these nationals serve for limited periods, the Secretariat loses the benefit of the expertise they have acquired during their service with the Secretariat and a great proportion of the recruitment work of the Secretariat has to be devoted to their replacement just to maintain the level of representation of the Member States concerned. New appointments often merely replace departing nationals of the same Member State without improving its representation.

12. With regard to the other two recommendations in (b) and (c) of paragraph 9, preference will always be given to other qualified candidates of Member States that are within their desirable range. However, the Secretary-General believes that he must retain the authority to appoint nationals of over-represented countries in the event that qualified candidates are not available from Member States that are unrepresented, under-represented or within their range.

/...

B. Extensive use of permanent contracts - Recommendations 3 and 4

13. The JIU report has identified the extensive use of permanent appointments as another factor hindering the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It therefore recommends the reduction of the number of staff on permanent contracts to less than 50 per cent of all the staff in posts subject to geographical distribution and the introduction of a new type of interruptible (rotation) contract for fixed terms. The authors of another JIU report, which is also before the Assembly, state that the determination of the relative proportion of the two types of appointment should be made by the Member States alone (A/36/432, para. 49).

14. The report lists a number of reasons which proponents of permanent and fixed-term contracts have put forward for preferring one type of contract over the other. Various heads of departments and offices in their comments have emphasized the importance of relating this question to the need for continuity, for efficient operation of the services, and for the good administration of the Secretariat, including the legitimate career aspirations of the staff, as well as the independence of the Secretariat, rather than the requirements of geographical distribution. Several have recognized that the recommendation would adversely affect the morale of their staff. The recommendation is specifically objected to by representatives of the staff in their statements (A/C.5/36/19, paras 96-98) submitted under the item on personnel questions.

15. The JIU report raises the basic question of what should be the ratio of fixed-term to career appointments for staff in posts subject to geographical distribution and who should determine it. This question of the ratio has been the subject of a number of discussions in the Fifth Committee. In 1957, the Committee, in its report (A/3558, para. 129), endorsed the recommendations of the 1956 Salary Review Committee (A/3209, para. 54) that 20 per cent of all appointments should be fixed-term. In 1959, when the ratio was still less than 20 per cent, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1436 (XIV) of 5 December 1959, which was recalled in resolution 35/210. The 20 per cent ratio was achieved in 1961 and the Committee of Experts on the review of the activities and organization of the Secretariat suggested at the time that the percentage could be raised to 25 per cent by 1962 (A/4776, para. 92). In 1962, the then Acting Secretary-General suggested that the proportion should be kept at about 25 per cent (A/5270, para. 66). He noted that there were cogent arguments for maintaining the bulk of the Secretariat on a career basis but that the determination of what the percentage should be could be deferred. In discussions in 1963, some Member States suggested that 20 per cent should not be exceeded, others accepted the 25 per cent and a few felt that 75 per cent would be more appropriate (A/5646, para. 9).

16. In its resolution 2241A (XXI) of 20 December 1966, the General Assembly recognized the need for a large proportion of permanent contracts and fixed-term contracts of longer duration to ensure the stability and efficient operation of the Secretariat, and noted the statement of the Secretary-General that he had no reason to believe that he should change the target of 25 per cent (A/6487, para 14). The Assembly went on to express the belief that, as a temporary measure, increased recruitment on the basis of fixed-term contracts, especially in the case of developing countries, might help to achieve a balanced geographical distribution.

/...

As the Secretary-General noted in his report to the Assembly at its twenty-fourth session in 1969 (A/7745, para. 16), there could be little doubt of the desirability of the ratio of 25 to 75 per cent between staff serving on a fixed-term or career basis. However, it was inevitable that so long as recruitment was geared to a rapid improvement in the geographical distribution of the staff, a relatively high proportion of appointments would be granted on a fixed-term basis. In its resolution 2539 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969, the Assembly recognized that long-term service is conducive to greater efficiency in certain posts entailing complex duties and responsibilities. The question of fixed-term appointments has not been referred to by the Assembly between that time and resolution 35/210.

17. The JIU report notes that the percentage of staff on fixed-term appointments in other organizations of the United Nations system is much higher than is the case in the United Nations. This depends partly on the policy of the governing bodies and perhaps even more so on the nature of the work done by these organizations, particularly those whose area of responsibility has a highly technical character. It is natural that they should have a higher proportion of staff on fixed-term contracts. In the United Nations the fact that UNIDO has a much higher proportion than normal is partly the result of the technological aspects of their responsibilities. This also affects the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). However, in the case of UNEP, the majority of its staff are appointed against funds authorized from the United Nations Environment Fund on contracts that limit their service to UNEP. Until December 1980 such staff were not granted career appointments. It was only in that month that the Secretary-General acceded to a request by the Executive Director of UNEP that the latter be authorized to grant probationary appointments leading to permanent appointments to staff appointed to the Fund posts. In the case of UNIDO, the Executive Director has been granted authority, under interim arrangements give UNIDO greater autonomy prior to its becoming a specialized agency, to appoint staff at the P-1 to P-4 levels on fixed-term appointments for two years at a time limited to service with UNIDO.

18. The question of who should determine the ratio of fixed-term to career appointments has been considered by a number of bodies. The authors of the present JIU report implied that it should be decided by the General Assembly. The authors of the other JIU report (A/36/432) argue that the ratio should be the subject of negotiations among the Member States. The International Civil Service Commission has reviewed this question and its views are summarized in its report to the present session ^{1/} as follows:

"the determination of the proportion of permanent and fixed-term staff should be made on an organization-by-organization basis so as to reflect not only the differing functions and needs of the organizations but also the policy decisions of their governing bodies. It considered that some of the criteria by which the need for permanent or fixed-term staff should be determined were the nature of the functions to be performed (whether continuing or non-continuing), the structural pattern of the organization and the source of funding of posts."

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/36/30), annex I, para. 24.

The Secretary-General believes that the determination of the proper ratio between fixed-term and career posts is a complex question which must relate primarily to the operational needs of the Organization which may change over time.

19. The third recommendation of the JIU report states its objective that the majority of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution should be on fixed-term appointments. To this end, it suggests that no candidate should be granted a probationary contract on initial appointment and that a quota for the granting of permanent appointments be established by the General Assembly, until such time as the geographical distribution of the staff becomes equitable. It also indicates that the quota, 50 per cent or such other percentage as may be decided by the Assembly, should be related to the number of staff members with permanent appointments who are separated from service with the Organization. While this would achieve a statistical balance, it would make it very difficult for the Secretary-General to use the power of appointment on a career basis when he felt it proper in order to attract young candidates whose appointment the General Assembly has repeatedly urged in its resolutions 31/26 (para. 4), 32/17 B (para. 2) and 33/143 (sect. II para. 5).

20. The JIU recommendation for the introduction of rotation contracts for nationals of Member States whose nationals serve primarily on fixed-term contracts is similar to a proposal made by JIU in 1970 in its report on personnel problems in the United Nations (A/8454, paras. 430-431) which initiated many of the proposals for reform that have been considered in the past 10 years in the personnel administration of the Secretariat. At that time JIU proposed a system of secondments which would permit staff with permanent appointments to serve alternately with the Organization and with the civil services of their home countries.

21. In the present recommendation, JIU proposes a new type of interruptible fixed-term contract whereby a staff member who serves in the Secretariat on secondment from a national Government or institution would be allowed to go back to his or her national organization and then return to the Secretariat, if the initial period of service had been satisfactory. While the modalities of such an arrangement have not been specified, the Secretary-General considers that the disadvantages inherent in the original proposal would continue to be present in this proposal. It would interrupt the continuity of the work being undertaken in the Secretariat and result in increased difficulties for the career development and the administration of the staff. The Secretary-General is nevertheless appreciative of the valuable services rendered by individual staff members serving with the Secretariat on secondment from their Governments. It would be mutually advantageous to have the arrangements for such secondment regulated in a more systematic manner so that the Organization may obtain maximum benefits from the services of such seconded officials without the introduction of a new type of appointment.

C. Practice of filling vacancies preferably by internal promotion and transfer - Recommendation 5

22. In this section of its report, JIU recommends that vacancy announcements should be issued simultaneously for internal and external candidates and that the selection of candidates should be made strictly in conformity with Article 101 of

/...

the Charter and the relevant resolutions and staff regulations of the United Nations. The report interprets article 4.4 of the Staff Regulations to mean that when "qualifications are equal" preference should be given to persons already in the service of the United Nations or other organizations of the United Nations system. It suggests that the practice of the Secretariat of only circulating vacancy announcements when no internal candidate is available may be inconsistent with the requirement of the regulation since giving preference to internal candidates could result in a neglect of the basic principles for the recruitment of the staff under the Charter. This recommendation is somewhat at variance with the definition of the career concept proposed for the international civil service in the other JIU report on personnel policy options (A/36/432, paras. 38-42).

23. The Secretary-General considered that staff regulation 4.4 requires him to give preference over outside candidates to qualified staff already in the Secretariat, and to staff of other organizations in the United Nations system. However, it is the view of the Secretary-General that regulation 4.4 does not and should not exclude recruitment from outside the Secretariat. This preference has been exercised "without prejudice" to the recruitment of fresh talent at all levels, as is shown by the following table which gives the percentage, as at 30 June 1981, of the total staff at each level in posts subject to geographical distribution who were recruited at that level.

Staff at each level in posts subject to geographical
distribution who were recruited at that level

| <u>Professional category and above</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|--|-------------------|
| USG | 52 |
| ASG | 65 |
| D-2 | 43 |
| D-1 | 23 |
| P-5 | 25 |
| P-4 | 32 |
| P-3 | 39 |
| P-2 | 44 |
| P-1 | 33 |

24. In view of the recruitment targets set by the General Assembly, however, the Secretary-General considers that special measures may be required for a limited period. Therefore, 50 per cent of all available vacancies, i.e., those that are not filled from inside the department or office concerned, are earmarked for the recruitment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented Member States or of women. The remaining vacancies will be open to both internal and external candidates and will be filled in accordance with the normal assignment and recruitment procedures with staff regulation 4.4 being applied fully.

25. Preference for staff who have worked with the Organization must be maintained in order to provide incentive for outstanding effort or performance. The serving staff would interpret the elimination of this preference as a signal that the essential nature of the Secretariat as a career service has changed and their

morale would be seriously damaged. Outside candidates would not be attracted to serve for more than minimum periods of time since once appointed they would be in the same unsatisfactory position in which no recognition would be given to the value of the experience they gain with the Organization nor reward for their good service other than encouragement to leave it quickly. The concept of career development would lose much of its practical meaning.

D. Deficiencies in geographical distribution of staff at the senior and policy-making levels - Recommendation 6

26. In its report, JIU recommends that national targets related to the weighted desirable ranges for each region should be set for senior and policy-formulating posts.

27. After noting the degree to which some countries and regions are not represented at the Principal Office (D-1) level and above in posts subject to geographical distribution, the report suggests that the main purpose of the introduction by the General Assembly of weighted desirable ranges was "to ensure that Member States would have a balanced quantitative and qualitative representation". This phrase was used by the Assembly in its resolution 34/219 of 20 December 1979 with respect to a study dealing with an indicative evaluation of posts in relation to the way the weighted desirable ranges are calculated. In that resolution the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to undertake such a study without establishing any new directives in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 1, of the Charter. The new directives, which were subsequently established by the General Assembly in resolution 35/210, did not change the purpose of the weighted ranges, but only reaffirmed, in paragraph 5 of section I, the need to increase the representation of developing countries in senior and policy-formulating posts while safeguarding the principle of equitable geographical distribution in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Assembly.

28. Although the Secretary-General in his report on the geographical distribution of staff (A/C.5/35/36) responded to the request contained in General Assembly resolution 34/219, no change was made by resolution 35/210 in the arrangements under which the weighted ranges were calculated and the purposes for which they were established. These have been reported annually for the information of the Assembly in response to General Assembly resolution 2359 (XXII) of 19 December 1967. They have never been used as a regular measurement of the representation of Member States for the purpose of guiding recruitment policy. The Secretary-General indicated at the time that he believed that the introduction of a system of weighting into the recruitment policy of the United Nations would bring about only marginal refinements. He continues to believe, as he had indicated then that "the task of securing the staff required by the Organization for its varied activities, a task which calls for constant reconciliation of the criteria of personal capacity and geographical distribution laid down in the Charter, is not susceptible of reduction to a mathematical formula" (A/6860, para. 41).

29. The application of the weighted ranges, which are more refined under the new system of establishing the desirable range, to the four least populous of the nine grades of posts subject to geographical distribution, would reduce the work of the Office of Personnel Services to a search for persons who were statistically appropriate but whose occurrence might be so rare that it was unlikely they would

/...

ever be found in combination with the appropriate qualifications for the occupations in which they would be required to function within the Secretariat. The percentage distribution of staff at the D-1 level and above in posts subject to geographical distribution is shown by region each year in the statistical tables attached to the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat. Over the last four years the movement has been as follows:

Percentage distribution of staff in senior posts
and mid-point of desirable range by region

| | <u>1978</u> | | <u>1981</u> | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| | <u>Mid-point</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Mid-point</u> | <u>Actual</u> |
| Africa | 10.2 | 11.4 | 13.5 | 13.3 |
| Asia and the Pacific | 21.3 | 15.6 | 18.1 | 19.6 |
| Europe (Eastern) | 14.2 | 11.1 | 13.2 | 10.6 |
| Europe (Western) | 22.7 | 26.1 | 22.8 | 25.5 |
| Latin America | 7.2 | 9.1 | 7.7 | 8.2 |
| Middle East | 4.4 | 6.0 | 5.5 | 6.9 |
| Middle East | 20.0 | 19.6 | 19.2 | 15.4 |
| North America and the Caribbean | - | 1.1 | - | 0.5 |
| Other | - | - | - | - |
| Total | <u>100.0</u> | <u>100.0</u> | <u>100.0</u> | <u>100.0</u> |

These figures show that the concern expressed by JIU on this matter was shared by the Secretary-General and that serious efforts were made over the last few years to ensure that qualified candidates for senior posts were recruited from as wide a geographical basis as possible, particularly from those regions where most of the developing countries are situated.

E. Staff in the Professional category and above who are excluded from posts subject to geographical distribution - Recommendation 7

30. In this section of its report, JIU recommends that technical advisers, regional and interregional advisers and the staff of the United Nations institutes should be considered to be staff in posts subject to geographical distribution and brought within the system of desirable ranges. Staff have always been appointed in these circumstances under the 200 series of Staff Rules for Technical Assistance Project Personnel, partly because the funds from which they were paid came from technical co-operation projects.

31. Technical advisers are generally assigned to serve at Headquarters, UNCTAD, UNIDO or UNEP and provide technical support required for technical co-operation projects, advising the departments or offices concerned on technical matters related to the projects managed by these departments and offices. These advisers perform a crucial function that requires high technical qualifications and expertise, the availability of which may be limited at any given time. The Secretary-General believes that staff performing exclusively technical support functions requiring such expertise should continue to be excluded from posts subject to geographical distribution. He considers, however, that it would be advisable for all the posts of technical advisers to be reviewed to ensure that

/...

their incumbents are performing exclusively the functions for which they were selected. All posts which are not exclusively related to these functions will then be treated as posts subject to geographical distribution and filled when they became vacant by regular staff appointed under the 100 series of staff rules.

32. The functions which are assigned to regional and interregional advisers are quite different in nature from those of technical advisers. The posts of regional and interregional advisers were established in order to ensure that in areas of technical expertise where no single Government required the services of a technical co-operation expert full time, but many Governments required the services of such experts for short periods, it was much more efficient to appoint full-time experts to such posts and make them either available immediately or within a much shorter time than would have been the case had they had to be recruited each time they are required. As with technical advisers, the Secretary-General continues to believe that posts of this nature, the purpose of which is exclusively to advise Governments, should continue to be treated as project personnel posts, excluded from posts subject to geographical distribution. He considers, however, that it would be useful to review all such posts to ensure that the functions assigned to them are exclusively of this nature. Such posts should not be used to increase the staff resources supporting the regular functions of the departments and offices in which they are located.

33. With respect to the staff of the United Nations institutes, the intent at the time of their creation, which goes back in some cases to 20 years, was that the regional institutes would only be funded temporarily from technical co-operation sources. It was intended that they would then become truly regional and depend entirely on the resources that could be channelled from within the region. Steps in this direction appear to have been taken only with respect to the Asian Institute for Economic Development and Planning. In view of the fact that such funding has not materialized, the institutes continue to be dependent on technical co-operation funding and their staff appointed under the 200 series of staff rules. Moreover, these institutes have been established to respond to particular needs of the different regions. If their staff were to be made subject to geographical distribution, the institutes might have to close for an extended period while the heavy concentration of nationals of over-represented Member States is eliminated and the more restrictive recruitment procedures for geographical posts are followed.

34. As regards the other institutes, which are not regional in scope, such as the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute (UNSDRI) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the decision to have their staff appointed under the 200 series of staff rules may not have been appropriate. In the case of the recently established United Nations Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, it has already been decided that the staff should be appointed under the 100 series of staff rules, with appointments limited to service with the Institute. It may therefore be appropriate for the staff of UNSDRI and UNRISD to be appointed also under the 100 series of staff rules and either be incorporated in an appropriate department or office of the Secretariat and treated as integral parts of such units funded exclusively from extrabudgetary resources or be given appointments limited to service with the Institute concerned. They would be then considered to be in posts subject to geographical distribution, unless their appointments were limited

/...

to service with the Institute, in which case they would be treated separately for the purpose of geographical distribution as is the case with staff appointed to posts financed from the United Nations Environment Fund.

F. Practice of appointing nationals from States which are not Members of the United Nations

35. The JIU report comments on the practice of appointing nationals of States which are not members of the United Nations. It suggests that greater restraint should be used in appointing such nationals to posts subject to geographical distribution.

36. Since the General Assembly, in its resolution 30 (I) of 9 February 1946, envisaged the possibility of nationals of States which are not Member States being appointed to the Secretariat and since Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations states that membership in the Organization is open to all peace-loving States which accept the obligations of the Charter, there can be no objection to the appointment of nationals of countries towards whose independence and later membership the Organization is working. As a result, a number of States had some of their nationals already in posts subject to geographical distribution when they became Members of the Organization.

37. In view of the fact that some non-member States participate in the work of subsidiary organs of the United Nations although they are not members of the Organization, the Secretary-General considers it also appropriate to appoint a certain number of nationals of these States particularly to posts which are directly related to the work of the subsidiary organs in which these countries participate. It should be noted that there are only 36 staff members in posts subject to geographical distribution who are not nationals of a Member State, representing 1.24 per cent of all the staff in such posts.

G. Extension beyond the age of retirement - Recommendation 8.

38. The JIU report recommends that the maximum extension beyond the age of retirement at 60 should not be more than three months and that it should be granted only when time is really necessary for finding a suitable replacement. This matter has been the subject of considerable discussion in the Fifth Committee, resulting in explicit directives by the General Assembly which allow exceptions up to six months beyond the established age of retirement, only for the purpose of finding a suitable replacement.

39. The Secretary-General has indicated the limited circumstances under which he intends, in the light of this directive, to exercise the authority given to him under article 9.5 of the Staff Regulations of the United Nations to extend this age limit in exceptional cases. The JIU recommendation would limit this flexibility even further. The Secretary-General does not consider such further restriction to be necessary. The number of extensions authorized under the existing guideline has already been reduced to a minimum.

H. Recruitment procedures - Recommendation 9

40. The JIU report draws attention to delays with respect to the issuance of vacancy announcements and to the length of the appointment process. It recommends that the recruitment and appointment process should be shortened and simplified. The Secretary-General shares this objective and will do whatever he can to achieve this aim. However, the recruitment and appointment process has been the subject of specific directives of the General Assembly which has introduced the procedures and mechanisms for the recruitment and appointment of staff set forth in the annex to resolution 35/210. The Secretary-General believes that experience must be gained with these procedures and will not hesitate to introduce further changes which assist in speeding up the recruitment and appointment processes within the guidelines established by the Assembly.

I. Recruitment planning - Recommendation 10

41. The JIU report noted that up to May 1981 there were no recruitment plans in many entities of the United Nations which would serve as a basis for the preparation of an annual work plan of recruitment of the Office of Personnel Services. It therefore recommends that the preparation of the plan should be expedited, taking into account resolution 35/210, and that all entities of the United Nations should co-operate fully with the Office of Personnel Services in the preparation of this plan. In the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/36/495), the Secretary-General has reported separately on the implementation of the requests of the General Assembly in its resolution 35/210.