

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Paul Heinbecker
on behalf of CANZ
to the United Nations 5th Committee Meeting on Human Resources
Monday, 30 October 2000**

Madame Deputy Secretary-General,
Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am very pleased to address the Committee today on behalf of the delegations of Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary General for introducing the report on Human Resources Management (A/55/253) and related reports for this item. I would also like to thank Ambassador Mselle, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing that Committee's report.

Mr. Chairman,
One of the key issues that Fifth Committee is taking up this session is the Secretary General's Human Resources Reform package. This package is the next - - and very welcome - - step arising from the Secretary General's 1997 package of measures and proposals for UN reform.

The need for Human Resources Management reform was acute in 1997. Internal and external realities make this need even greater today. First of all, the UN has itself changed. As the latest Secretary General's report on HRM observes, the UN has developed from a Headquarters-based organization to one with a strong field presence. This requires a mobile workforce. There is also the need to address high vacancy rates and the imminent departure of a great number of staff, making immediate staffing and future planning a must.

Changes outside the Organization have also had an impact. Member States are examining the UN with ever increasing scrutiny to ensure that resources are managed effectively and efficiently. At the same time, recognizing that HRM reforms have been underway for some time in governments, international organizations and the private sector, the UN must also keep in step with these changes. A process-based organization that simply rewards longevity in the system will not attract the talent needed in the 21st century. To be an employer of choice and to attract the best and the brightest, the UN must adapt and modernize its HRM policies, and must offer a challenging and rewarding work environment and attractive opportunities.

Mr. Chairman,

We are confident that this reform package will help the UN address these current challenges and prepare for future ones. Our three delegations would like to express our full support for the

Secretary General's reform proposals. In our view, these proposals deserve our support simply because they advance a HRM vision for the Organization that makes sense. This vision involves, as the SG said, the creation of "a simplified structure that avoids duplication and achieves greater impact; empowered and responsible staff and managers; a leaner and more efficient UN Secretariat and an organization that fosters management excellence and is accountable for achieving results determined by Member States".

The report demonstrates that a great deal of effort and progress has been made over the last two years in reforming the UN system. The report also reflects broad-based and extensive consultations with staff that went into developing these proposals. And, most importantly, the report shows that the Secretary General has rightly moved forward under his authority as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization. We applaud this initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the fact that the reforms are comprehensive. We note that the Human Resources Management package requires the agreement of the Fifth Committee on only one issue; that of changing a staff rule related to recruitment, placement and promotion.

We lend our full support to the concrete steps that have been taken in all other areas of the package. We welcome actions to improve human resources planning. We strongly support measures to enhance mobility. These measures are proactive and will help to achieve a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service - - one in which staff reflect the truly global reach of the Organization. In this context, we have noted the ACABQ's comments on mobility and reiterate our full support for the Secretary General's proposals to enhance this critical element of the reforms. In addition, we welcome action to adapt contractual arrangements to better serve the organization and its employees, as well as to bring the UN into line with other international organizations. And we welcome action on administration of justice, the development of competencies and continuous learning, performance management and career development. Finally, we recognize the enhanced accountability measures that underpin each of these reform proposals and give these measures our fullest support.

One final comment, Mr. Chairman, before I conclude.

Our three delegations have long advocated gender parity in the Secretariat. We support the General Assembly's goal of 50/50 gender balance and encourage the Secretary General to speed up efforts to implement this goal. The fact that more male than female staff will be retiring from the Organization in the near future presents an opportunity to improve the gender balance. We support the Secretary General's call to Member States to propose more women candidates from a broader array of occupations, for appointment or election to intergovernmental and expert bodies and for positions within the Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman,

Sustaining meritorious performance from staff and managing them capably are fundamental to the Organizations' success in meeting the goals of the UN. We believe that these reforms have rightly been given top priority by the Secretary-General and we fully support their speedy implementation.