



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

Statement

82nd Session of the Standing Committee of UNHCR Agenda Item 2 (c): Human Resources

Statement by Ms. Farhat Ayesha, Minister
(15 September 2021)

Honourable Chairperson,

At the outset, we would like to express our commendation for your able stewardship of the Standing Committee. We thank the High Commissioner for his timely visit to our region and welcome him in Islamabad today. We thank the Deputy High Commissioner and her team for updating us about the measures being taken for the welfare of UNHCR staff and improvements in their capacities. We also appreciate sharing of the latest disaggregated data about the international professional staff.

We commend UNHCR staff for accomplishing mandated activities; in providing humanitarian relief often in challenging situations, compounded by COVID pandemic. We offer condolences to the families of those staff who passed away.

It is encouraging to note significant progress achieved by organization in its goal of achieving gender equality. However, it is a matter of concern that huge gender disparities exist with regard to personnel belonging to developing and refugee host countries. At the senior management level, these disparities are quite stark with almost no presence of women from the developing and refugee host countries. We urge the UNHCR to take affirmative steps to off-set these disparities. We would welcome feedback from the Senior Management of Human Resources Bureau about the specific measures taken during last one year to encourage women candidates from developing countries to apply for senior positions in UNHCR.

Furthermore, we continue to note with concern the chronic stark imbalances in geographical representation in UNHCR. Almost 40% of UNHCR international staff, particularly at the senior management level comes from less than 20 countries, while the rest of 60% staff belongs to more than 120 countries. These trends have persisted since long. We expect the UNHCR Senior Management to devise concrete plans and actions to redress these imbalances.

Chairperson,

We would like to recall the advice of the General Assembly for UNHCR, recognizing the value of a geographically diverse and representative work force with a view to reflecting the international character of Office of the High Commissioner, and reiterate the call on the UNHCR to take effective measures to ensure balanced geographical representation and gender parity across the regions, in particular from under represented States, among its workforce both at the Headquarters and in the field, including at the senior level.

We also reiterate our call for more equitable geographic distribution of employment opportunities in the UNHCR especially with respect to balanced representation from developing and refugee hosting countries particularly women representation at the senior management level.

We encourage the Human Resource Division to adjust the criteria while upholding merit and professional competence, widely disseminate information about job opportunities, giving sufficient timeline for the candidates to file applications and encourage those candidates having local knowledge of the working environment where UNHCR operates.

We also encourage UNHCR to continue reporting under this agenda item and hope that next year's report would address these imbalances.

Thank you
