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**Human resources management**

## **Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics**

### **Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered an advance version of the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics ([A/78/569](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses dated 29 January 2024.

2. The Secretary-General indicates that his annual report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions on human resources management, the most recent of which is resolution [77/278](#). The report covers the one-year period from 1 January to 31 December 2022. In addition, the Secretary-General submitted an addendum containing a proposal on the movement of Secretariat staff from the General Service category to the Professional category ([A/78/569/Add.1](#)). The observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee in relation to the addendum are reflected in a separate report ([A/78/745/Add.1](#)).

#### **II. Staff demographics**

##### **A. Presentation and analysis**

3. In his report, the Secretary-General provides an overview and an analysis of trends of the staff composition of the Secretariat, covering demographic variables such as age, gender and nationality, as well as structural elements of the workforce, including entity, location, category and appointment type. The report also contains data on expected retirements, inflow and outflow of staff in the Organization, as well as disaggregated data on staff subject to the system of desirable ranges ([A/78/569](#), para. 1).



4. The Secretary-General indicates that his report has been revised in several areas in accordance with resolution 77/278 and that additional in-depth analyses and enhanced visuals have been introduced (*ibid.*, paras. 1 and 2). For example, the section on staff movements has been reviewed to provide greater disaggregated information on external and internal recruitments, as well as further analysis on appointments and separations, including specifically on resignations, in response to paragraphs 13 and 44 of resolution 77/278. Furthermore, information pertaining to the system of desirable ranges has been expanded to include the number of movements of geographical posts needed for each Member State to achieve within-range status, in line with paragraph 22 of resolution 77/278. A list of high-level changes is contained in table 4 of the annex to the report of the Secretary-General. **The Advisory Committee notes the copious information and the changes presented in the report on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics and trusts that the Secretary-General will make efforts to focus his future composition reports on workforce data reflecting progress towards strategic outcomes, including geographical distribution and representation, gender, as well as rejuvenation, and to provide trend analysis and identify potential challenges in human resources management (see also resolution 77/278, para. 42).**

5. The report of the Secretary-General is complemented by the new United Nations Secretariat Workforce Portal, which was launched for the benefit of all Member States in 2023 and provides the representation status of Member States and staff information, including demographics and structural and forecast retirement data. According to the Secretariat, through continuous development and enhancement, the portal will eventually offer Member States the opportunity to benefit from daily and digital access to Secretariat workforce data, which are currently only available through annual paper-based reporting (A/78/569, para. 3; see also para. 53 below). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the name, nationality, grade level and entity of staff were available in the portal in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/226 and under the parameters outlined in the personal data protection and privacy principles adopted by the High-level Committee on Management in 2018. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will ensure that the new workforce portal contains comprehensive, detailed and up-to-date statistical information. The Committee also trusts that more information on the list of staff on the portal will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and in the next report on the composition of the Secretariat.**

## B. Secretariat staff and trends

6. The report of the Secretary-General provides statistical data on the staff of the Secretariat as at 31 December 2022 and over the five-year period from 31 December 2018 to 31 December 2022, as summarized in tables 1 and 2. Over the five-year period: (a) the number of staff of the Secretariat and related entities in the United Nations system increased by 8.4 per cent, from 76,590 to 83,005; (b) the number of Secretariat staff decreased by 1.9 per cent, from 37,505 to 36,791; (c) the proportion of Secretariat staff in the Professional and higher categories relative to total staff increased from 34.8 per cent to 39.3 per cent, while that of staff in the General Service and related categories decreased from 55.6 per cent to 52.5 per cent; (d) the ratio of staff holding permanent or continuing appointments relative to total staff decreased by 2.8 percentage points, from 29.1 per cent to 26.3 per cent, while that of staff holding fixed-term appointments increased from 62.9 per cent to 65.2 per cent; (e) the overall proportion of female staff relative to total staff increased from 36.8 per cent to 41.4 per cent; (f) the average age of Secretariat staff members increased by 1.5 per cent, from 45.7 years to 47.2 years; (g) the average length of service within the

Secretariat increased from 8.7 years to 9.9 years (see [A/74/82](#), table 13, and [A/78/569](#), table 16); (h) the number of Secretariat staff with geographical status increased by 3.5 per cent, from 3,107 to 3,216; and (i) the number of Member States within range in the system of desirable ranges remained at 105.

## 1. Trends in the size of the Secretariat staff population

7. While the overall Secretariat staff population decreased by 1.9 per cent over the five-year period from 2018 to 2022, it increased by 2.9 per cent, from 35,762 to 36,791, in the one-year period from 2021 to 2022. This increase was driven mainly by the resumption of hiring against regular budget posts following the lifting of the temporary suspension of hiring in April 2021, increased temporary appointments for the servicing of conferences to meet the higher demand for on-site meetings in the post-pandemic environment, and additional staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the resident coordinator system, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([A/78/569](#), summary and para. 6). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the temporary recruitment suspension had reduced movement into regular budget posts by 67.0 per cent and, among other things, put on hold progress towards equitable geographical distribution due to the Organization's inability to fill vacant geographical posts (see para. 16 below).

8. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, in accordance with the delegation of authority, heads of entity had responsibility for their local human resources processes, including downsizing. A United Nations Secretariat-wide policy on downsizing or restructuring resulting in termination of appointments ([ST/AI/2023/1](#)) was issued on 20 January 2023 and was subsequently complemented by guidelines providing additional information, including practical advice, information, step-by-step processes and explanations. The Committee recalls that the policy was recently applied in the context of the drawdown and withdrawal of the personnel of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (see [A/78/608](#), paras. 20–24). As regards the possible impact of downsizing processes, particularly of large peacekeeping missions, on equitable geographical distribution, the Committee was informed that the retention of staff members affected by downsizing was guided by the provisions of staff rule 9.6 (c), which required the Organization to give due regard to nationality when making selections of suitable candidates to posts subject to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The Secretariat indicated that, with the expansion starting from 1 January 2024, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/278](#), of the system of desirable ranges to include all posts funded by the regular budget at the Professional and higher categories in special political missions and peacekeeping operations, excluding language posts (see para. 24 below), the upcoming downsizing of special political missions and peacekeeping operations would affect the availability of some of those posts but that its possible impact on equitable geographical distribution could not be predicted at present. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will ensure that downsizing processes will be efficient, transparent and fair and adhere to the relevant legal framework, including staff rule 9.6 (c). The Committee also trusts that information on the application of the Secretariat-wide downsizing policy and related guidance, including data on any impact on equitable geographical distribution and representation, will be provided in the next report of the Secretary-General.**

## 2. Trends in the distribution of staff by category

9. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that, over the five-year period from 2018 to 2022, the ratio of staff in the Professional and higher categories to total staff increased by 4.5 per cent, while the ratio of Field Service staff and staff in the General

Service and related categories decreased by 1.3 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively. The decrease in staff in these categories is attributed mainly to the closure and transition plans of field operations (A/78/569, table 2). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee received information on the growth of all positions in the Secretariat by grade, excluding extrabudgetary posts, for which information was not readily available. The data provided indicate that, for the period from 2018 to 2022, while the number of positions in the Professional and higher categories increased by 0.8 per cent (from 8,920 to 8,992), General Service positions decreased by 4.0 per cent (from 2,623 to 2,519), National Professional Officer positions decreased by 16.9 per cent (from 9,229 to 7,665) and Field Service positions decreased by 7.3 per cent (from 3,545 to 3,287). **The Advisory Committee notes the decrease in staff and positions in the General Service and related categories and trusts that greater information on the drivers thereof and future trends to the extent possible will be provided in the next report on the composition of the Secretariat.**

### 3. Trends in the types of appointment

10. As at 31 December 2022, 26.3 per cent of staff held permanent or continuing contracts, 65.2 per cent fixed-term contracts and 8.5 per cent temporary contracts (ibid., figure IV). The number of staff holding permanent or continuing appointments saw a downward trend during the five-year reporting period, including a 3.0 per cent decline, from 9,979 staff in 2021 to 9,680 in 2022, attributable to retirements and the absence of continuing appointment exercises (ibid., para. 34). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that staff members recruited through a competitive examination pursuant to staff rule 4.16 should be granted a continuing appointment after two years on a fixed-term appointment, subject to satisfactory service. For all other staff members recruited through the staff selection system, conversion to a continuing appointment was subject to a set of eligibility criteria and ranking based on a points system allocation, assessed through periodic reviews, in order to ensure that the number of staff members holding continuing (or permanent) appointments in the Organization did not exceed at any time the ceiling set by the General Assembly (see resolution 65/247). Since the approval of continuing appointments in 2010, four periodic reviews had been completed, with a total of 7,234 conversions at all levels up to D-1. The review exercise for the years from 2016 to 2021 would be concluded by 2023. In accordance with resolution 65/247, the Secretary-General planned to present a report to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session on the implementation of the continuing appointments regime, with the aim of reviewing the system of granting continuing appointments, including the methodology for determining the post envelope. **The Advisory Committee looks forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the continuing appointments regime to be submitted at the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly and trusts that it will include comprehensive information on the number of continuing appointments.**

11. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the number of staff holding temporary appointments increased by 26.6 per cent during the one-year period, from 2,477 staff in 2021 to 3,136 in 2022. Around one third of temporary appointments was attributable to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, which made use of such appointments to support the return to in-person conference servicing in the post-pandemic environment. Other entities driving the increased use of temporary appointments during the period were the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Environment Programme (A/78/569, para. 34). It is indicated in the report that, although recorded for administrative purposes as temporary staff, staff recruited to support conference services were mainly on when-actually-employed contractual arrangements (ibid., paras. 22 and 32). As at 31 December 2022, there were 896 staff

with when-actually-employed contracts (ibid., footnote 6). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the use of when-actually-employed contracts for language professionals enabled the Organization to complement the authorized staffing table for short periods of time when the overall workload surpassed the in-house capacity based on workload standards and scheduled meetings. Staff members who held a short-term language appointment on the when-actually-employed modality were subject to the conditions outlined in administrative instruction [ST/AI/2010/4/Rev.2](#). Staff members on this employment modality, other than for short-term language appointments, were remunerated using the salary scales appropriate to the level of the appointment as for all other staff, stated as daily rates representing 1/365th of the annual scale. However, these appointments did not give rise to annual, special or sick leave and did not carry any entitlement to dependency or other benefits or allowances. In addition, they were excluded from participation in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

#### 4. Staff subject to the system of desirable ranges

12. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that, as at 31 December 2022, there were 3,216 Secretariat staff with geographical status pursuant to paragraph 66 of General Assembly resolution [65/247](#), in which the Assembly decided that staff members should retain geographical status only when serving against a post subject to equitable geographical distribution, except those recruited under the young professionals programme, who should always retain their geographical status (ibid., para. 94).

13. As at 31 December 2022, the difference between the number of posts subject to equitable geographical distribution (3,734) and the number of staff with geographical status serving against a geographical post (3,216) was accounted for by 306 vacant posts, 260 posts temporarily encumbered by staff without geographical status and 51 personnel with limited appointments. In addition, the total number of staff with geographical status (3,216) included 95 staff members in the young professionals programme serving against non-geographical posts and 4 staff members holding liens against geographical posts (ibid.). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the limited appointment status was used for temporary and fixed-term appointments where the appointment had been granted for a finite period of time and the staff member had not gone through a competitive process under staff rule 4.15 (review by a central review body) or staff rule 4.16 (competitive recruitment examination). Staff members on limited appointments who had not been selected through a competitive review process were not eligible for continuing appointments and did not have geographical status. **The Advisory Committee trusts that further information on the encumbering of geographical posts by personnel with limited appointments, including regarding their location, will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

14. Table 1 provides a summary of the status of posts subject to equitable geographical distribution over the five-year reporting period from 2018 to 2022, the incumbency of those posts broken down to illustrate the evolution in the number of staff with geographical status over the past five years against the total posts subject to equitable geographical distribution (ibid., para. 95 and table 31).

Table 1  
**Summary of posts subject to equitable geographical distribution as at  
 31 December for 2018 to 2022**

(Population: 3,734 as at 31 December 2022)

<i>Status</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>
Posts encumbered by staff with geographical status	3 062	3 110	3 059	3 033	3 117
Posts temporarily encumbered by staff without geographical status	279	174	159	200	260
Limited appointment status	51	51	47	44	51
Vacant	212	276	416	416	306
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 604</b>	<b>3 611</b>	<b>3 681</b>	<b>3 693</b>	<b>3 734</b>

15. It is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General that, although the number of staff with geographical status increased from 2018 to 2022, which was broadly in line with the growth in the number of posts subject to equitable geographical distribution, the increase in the number of posts that were vacant on the respective reporting date (31 December) for each year in 2020 and 2021 resulted in a decelerated increase in the number of staff members with geographical status. The 416 vacant posts reported for 2020 and 2021 resulted from the temporary suspension on hiring on regular budget posts and reduced hiring during the pandemic. Some of those effects also extended into 2022 (*ibid.*, para. 96). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 22 December 2023, 96 of the total 191 vacant P-2 posts in the Secretariat were geographical posts; that is, 50 per cent of all vacant P-2 posts were geographical posts.

16. The Advisory Committee again expresses concern regarding the continued significant number of vacant posts subject to equitable geographical distribution, including at the P-2 level, and of geographical posts temporarily encumbered by staff without geographical status and with limited appointments (see also [A/77/729](#), para. 12). The Committee recalls that the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all posts subject to the system of desirable ranges are encumbered accordingly and vacant posts are filled expeditiously (resolution [77/278](#), para. 25). The Committee also recalls that the Assembly repeatedly requested the Secretary-General to undertake pre-posting of job openings irrespective of the liquidity situation of the Organization and to proactively approach pre-posting of vacancies in order to be in a position to expeditiously launch and complete recruitment actions, including the appointment of the selected candidates (see resolutions [78/252](#), para. 26, and [77/262](#), para. 23). The Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide information on efforts undertaken, including with respect to the pre-posting of vacancies, and results achieved in his future reports on human resources management.

17. Table 2 provides a summary of the representation of Member States under the system of desirable ranges from 31 December 2018 to 31 December 2022 ([A/78/569](#), table 32).



Table 2  
**Representation of Member States under the system of desirable ranges as at 31 December for 2018 to 2022**

(Population: 193 Member States)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Unrepresented</i>	<i>Underrepresented</i>	<i>Within range</i>	<i>Overrepresented</i>
December 2018	21	40	105	27
December 2019	22	34	108	29
December 2020	20	37	109	27
December 2021	21	36	106	30
December 2022	20	37	105	31

18. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that, over the five-year reporting period between 2018 and 2022, the number of overrepresented Member States grew from 27 to 31, while the combined number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States decreased from 61 to 57: the underrepresented Member States decreased from 40 to 37 and the unrepresented Member States decreased slightly from 21 to 20, hovering between 20 and 22 throughout the period. The Committee notes that the number of Member States within range was on average 106 throughout the five-year period.

19. In paragraph 22 of its resolution 77/278, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on each Member State's representation status, desirable range and movement of geographical posts needed to reach within-range status in his report on the composition of the Secretariat. Table 33 of the report of the Secretary-General shows the representation status of individual Member States as at 31 December 2022 and the number of staff with geographical status needed for each unrepresented, underrepresented and overrepresented Member State to reach within-range status. The data show that, of the 20 unrepresented Member States, the United Arab Emirates has the largest deficit, requiring an additional 16 staff. As regards the 37 underrepresented Member States, China has the largest deficit, requiring an additional 174 staff to achieve within-range status, followed by Japan (80), Saudi Arabia (25) and the United States of America (20). Among the 31 overrepresented Member States, Kenya exceeds the range by 54 staff, followed by Italy (43) and France (25) (*ibid.*, para. 99 and table 33).

20. It is indicated in the report that, of 217 Secretariat staff appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution in 2022: (a) 1 was from an unrepresented Member State as at 31 December 2021; (b) 70 were from underrepresented Member States; (c) 96 were from Member States within range; and (d) 50 were from overrepresented Member States (*ibid.*, table 38). The share of appointments of nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States decreased slightly, from 34.0 to 33.0 per cent of all appointments to posts subject to equitable geographical distribution during the reporting period. In this context, the Secretary-General notes that the number of geographical appointments tripled from 2020 to 2022, owing mainly to the lifting of the suspension of hiring for regular budget positions. The number of staff from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States who were appointed to geographical posts grew in similar proportion, from 25 as at 31 December 2021 to 71 as at 31 December 2022 (*ibid.*, para. 109). During the same period, 78 Secretariat staff members were appointed through the young professionals programme, 76 of whom were placed against posts subject to geographical distribution (*ibid.*, paras. 109, 112 and 113 and table 40).

21. The Secretary-General includes a performance indicator on recruitment from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States for geographical posts in his

compacts with senior managers (ibid., para. 101). In paragraph 26 of its resolution [77/278](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to urge his senior managers to meet the geographical targets contained in their compacts and to report on progress achieved in his report on the composition of the Secretariat. According to the report of the Secretary-General (ibid., annex, table 4), that request has been implemented in paragraph 109 of the report, which states that the share of appointments of nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States decreased slightly, from 34.0 to 33.0 per cent of all appointments to posts subject to geographical distribution during the reporting period. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, of the 30 entities where recruitment against geographical posts was relevant, 3 entities met or exceeded the 50.0 per cent target by 31 December 2022. A further nine entities were rated as “partial”, as they had recorded at least a 10.0 per cent increase in performance compared with 2021. The Committee recalls that the Board of Auditors noted in its latest report that the key performance indicator on geographical distribution had not been achieved for three consecutive years, with the percentage of appointments for geographical posts from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States remaining between 20 per cent and 22 per cent in 2020, 2021 and 2022, against the 50 per cent target ([A/78/5 \(Vol. I\)](#), chap. II, para. 404). **The Advisory Committee notes with concern that only three entities fully met or exceeded the target contained in the senior managers’ compacts for recruitment against geographical posts. Recalling the request of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General urge his senior managers to meet the geographical targets contained in the senior compacts and report on the progress achieved (resolution [77/278](#), para. 26), the Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will present comprehensive annual comparative data on the performance against the geographical targets contained in the senior managers’ compacts, by entity, to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and in future reports. The Committee also trusts that the Secretary-General will comply with the request of the Assembly to ensure that appropriate measures are taken in cases of non-compliance with the management objectives and performance measures of senior managers’ compacts, in particular with targets stipulated therein (see resolution [77/280](#), para. 9).** The Committee discusses this matter further in its report on the thirteenth progress report on accountability: strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat ([A/78/743](#)).

#### *Looking ahead*

22. Based on the number of geographical staff as at 31 December 2022 and anticipated retirements, by the end of 2032, the Secretariat would need to recruit 727 staff members with geographical status from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, as well as staff members from those Member States that will become unrepresented and underrepresented as a result of expected retirements of geographical staff, in order for those States to reach within-range status ([A/78/569](#), para. 123).

23. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the longer-term objective will be to have every Member State represented and to bring as many underrepresented Member States as possible to within-range status. A phased approach targeting unrepresented and underrepresented Member States aimed at reducing their number through incremental gains of 10.0 per cent each year is being pursued (ibid., para. 101). **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to work towards bringing each unrepresented and underrepresented Member State within its desirable range by 2030 (resolution [77/278](#), para. 24).** The Committee recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in his future composition reports comparative data by entity on the progress made against the yearly targeted incremental gains of



**10.0 per cent, being pursued by the Secretariat through its phased approach aimed at reducing the number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States.**

24. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 23 of its resolution [77/278](#), decided to widen the posts subject to desirable ranges to all posts funded by the regular budget at the Professional and higher categories, including in special political missions and peacekeeping operations, excluding language posts, with effect from 1 January 2024. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as a result of that decision, the number of geographical posts would increase to approximately 5,100 (reflecting an addition of 1,300 geographical posts), which would account for 28.0 per cent of the posts in the Professional and higher categories. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will make use of the increased number of geographical posts in particular to reduce the number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and provide an update on the efforts and results achieved in the next report on the composition of the Secretariat.**

25. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed of ongoing and planned initiatives, including the intention of the Secretariat to update the staff selection system, including through the staff selection 2.0 programme (see para. 47 below); the talent pool initiative launched in 2021, which includes over 200,000 subscribers from over 193 countries and supports hiring entities in promoting United Nations employment opportunities more systematically to talent from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States; strengthening the employer branding of the United Nations; United Nations career events for university students and recent graduates; and continued guidance, dialogue and support to entities across the Secretariat to attain entity-level geographical goals.

26. In paragraph 28 of its resolution [77/278](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to intensify his cooperation with all Member States, in particular the unrepresented and underrepresented ones, including through targeted outreach, with a view to attracting qualified candidates into the selection processes of job openings in the Secretariat. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Secretariat was undertaking targeted talent outreach with unrepresented and underrepresented Member States through purposeful partnerships with those Member States, the United Nations system and other networks, with a view to positioning the Organization as a top employer, creating awareness among the local population, gaining a better understanding of country-specific labour market trends and skill insights, and leveraging national resources and networks to reach qualified candidates. For example, in 2022, the Secretariat organized a virtual outreach round-table briefing for Member States and heads of Secretariat entities aimed at building and strengthening collaboration between the Secretariat and the permanent missions in New York of the unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and their relevant counterparts in the capitals to create awareness of job openings and opportunities at the United Nations. Within the United Nations, the Office of Human Resources concluded partnership agreements with the Department of Global Communications and the Development Coordination Office to engage United Nations country offices more deliberately to promote jobs at the United Nations. According to the Secretariat, progress in advancing equitable geographical distribution and recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible is considered by the Secretariat as a shared responsibility, and therefore, commitment and effective collaboration between the Secretariat and the Member States are viewed as paramount. **The Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to intensify targeted outreach, including in cooperation with Member States and United Nations entities, to promote United Nations human resources management goals at national levels and trusts that information on efforts undertaken and results achieved will be provided in his next report.**

*Equitable geographical distribution and geographical representation*

27. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the term “equitable geographical distribution” was used in many ways interchangeably with the term “equitable geographical representation” over the years by the Secretariat and Member States. However, to avoid confusion, the Secretariat has started advocating the use of “equitable geographical distribution” when referring to the system of desirable ranges, and “recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible” when referring to the overall workforce, which includes non-geographical posts, to use the term “geographical representation”. **The Advisory Committee notes that, presently, quantifiable targets exist only with respect to the system of desirable ranges. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide information on the possible measures to improve geographical representation outside the scope of the system of desirable ranges in accordance with Article 101 (3) of the Charter of the United Nations, at the time of its consideration of the present report and in his next report on human resources management. The Committee will continue its consideration of “equitable geographical distribution”, “geographical representation” and “recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible” in the context of the reports on human resources management to be submitted to the Assembly at the first part of the resumed seventy-ninth session.**

## 5. Gender balance

28. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that, as at 31 December 2022, overall, 41.4 per cent of staff members were women, reflecting an increase of 4.6 per cent over the five-year period from 2018 to 2022. The percentage of women in departments/offices, regional commissions and tribunals was 50.6 per cent (an increase in the share of 0.6 percentage point from 2021), while in peacekeeping operations, special political missions and other political presences, and the resident coordinator system, the share was 28.6 per cent (an increase in the share of 2.9 percentage points from 2021). As indicated in the report, commitment to the achievement of gender parity by 2028 remains a priority for the Secretary-General, and current efforts are aimed at sustaining parity where it has been achieved and accelerating progress where gaps persist, particularly in peacekeeping and special political missions, including due to the difficulty of attracting women to traditionally male-dominated roles and the living and working conditions at some missions ([A/78/569](#), paras. 40 and 41). In this respect, the Advisory Committee recalls that the Secretariat was working to build enabling environments, including through the ongoing development of gender-sensitive designs to improve the safety and well-being of women personnel in United Nations peace operations under the Elsie Initiative for Field Missions (see [A/77/767](#), para. 42).

29. Of the 217 Secretariat staff appointed to posts subject to equitable geographical distribution in 2022, 138 (or 63.5 per cent) were women, disaggregated as follows: (a) 1 from an unrepresented Member State as at 31 December 2021; (b) 46 from underrepresented Member States; (c) 59 from Member States within range; and (d) 32 from overrepresented Member States. In addition, 83 were from developing countries and 55 from developed countries ([A/78/569](#), table 38).

30. **The Advisory Committee acknowledges the overall progress made with respect to the increased representation of women in the Secretariat. The Committee, however, also notes their continuing low representation in peacekeeping operations, special political missions and other political presences and trusts that the Secretary-General will pursue efforts to attract and retain more women staff, particularly from unrepresented and underrepresented**

**Member States, in peacekeeping operations, special political missions and other political presences where gaps still exist, and report thereon in his next composition report.**

## 6. High-level staff

31. As at 31 December 2022, 149 Secretariat staff members were serving at the level of Under-Secretary-General or Assistant Secretary-General, reflecting a net increase of 4 staff, compared with 145 as at 31 December 2021, 152 as at 31 December 2020, 153 as at 31 December 2019 and 150 as at 31 December 2018. In addition, 802 staff were serving at the D-2 or D-1 level, reflecting a net increase of 5 staff compared with their number as at 31 December 2021 (see [A/78/569](#), table 11, and [A/77/729](#), para. 18). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, from the 2018–2019 biennium to 2022, the growth rate of regular budget posts, peacekeeping and support account posts and special political missions positions (excluding the following non-Secretariat entities that received regular budget funding: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), International Trade Centre, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and International Court of Justice) was as follows: Under-Secretary-General, -3.4 per cent; Assistant Secretary-General, 4.7 per cent; D-2, -1.3 per cent; and D-1, 0.6 per cent. **The Advisory Committee again stresses the continued need to monitor the large number of high-level posts and positions in the Organization and to ensure that any future proposals for the establishment of high-level positions entail a thorough review of existing functions and structures so as to minimize any possible overlap in the functional responsibilities at the higher levels of the Organization ([A/77/729](#), para. 18; see also para. 37 below).**

32. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with table 3, which contains a summary of the distribution of staff members at the D-1 level and above by regional group for the five-year period from 2018 to 2022.

Table 3

### Distribution of Secretariat staff at the D-1 level and above by regional group, 2018–2022

Regional group	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Number	Percentage <sup>a</sup>	Number	Percentage <sup>a</sup>	Number	Percentage <sup>a</sup>	Number	Percentage <sup>a</sup>	Number	Percentage <sup>a</sup>
African States	160	0.4	178	0.5	190	0.5	190	0.5	193	0.5
Asia-Pacific States	130	0.3	144	0.4	146	0.4	146	0.4	164	0.4
Eastern European States	42	0.1	51	0.1	49	0.1	54	0.2	54	0.1
Latin American and Caribbean States	67	0.2	77	0.2	79	0.2	83	0.2	74	0.2
Western European and other States	454	1.2	513	1.4	485	1.3	465	1.3	462	1.3
Other	3	–	5	–	5	–	5	–	5	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>2.5</b>

<sup>a</sup> Percentage of the total staff population in the Professional and higher, Field Service, and General Service and related categories.

33. **The Advisory Committee notes the imbalance in the representation of one group compared with the others throughout the five-year period and recommends that the Secretary-General continue to pursue further efforts to**

**achieve greater geographical diversity in high-level posts and systematically include the table above in the future reports on composition.**

34. Data contained in the report of the Secretary-General show that, as at 31 December 2022, 492 staff at the D-1 level and above were funded from the regular budget, 161 from the peacekeeping budget, 267 from extrabudgetary resources and 24 from other assessed and jointly funded activities and that 8 are not in Umoja, as they are administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (A/78/569, annex, table 3; see para. 52 below).

## **7. Ageing of staff and rejuvenation of the Secretariat**

35. The average age of Secretariat staff increased from 45.7 years to 47.2 years over the five-year period from 2018 to 2022, reflecting the impact of the mandatory retirement age being raised to 65 years for staff recruited before 1 January 2014, which came into effect on 1 January 2018 (A/78/569, para. 71; see resolution 70/244). However, the rate of ageing decelerated between December 2020 and December 2021 and remained stable at 0.2 years from 2021 to 2022 (A/78/569, table 2 and para. 45). Table 16 of the report of the Secretary-General provides the average age of all staff of the Secretariat by category and grade. **Considering the human resources management objective of rejuvenating the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee notes with concern that the average age of personnel at the P-2 level has consistently remained between 36 and 37 years for several years (A/77/580, table 15, A/76/570, table 28, A/75/591, table 16, and A/74/82, table 13; see also paras. 40 and 41 below).**

36. It is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General that the Secretariat plans to leverage the upcoming forecast retirements to make progress towards diversity goals that span geography, gender and age (A/78/569, para. 54). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, when considering all categories of staff (excluding the Deputy Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General categories, which were not subject to the mandatory age of separation) 7,942 forecast retirements were expected from 2023 to 2032. According to the report, of the staff expected to retire between 2023 and 2032, 4,200 are in the Director, Professional and Field Service categories (ibid., table 19). In the upcoming three-year period 2025–2027, an estimated 2,042 staff are projected to retire. Beginning in 2028, annual retirements will be twice the current numbers, and by 2036 there will be three times as many retirements as currently. The forecast annual increase in the number of staff retiring is projected to continue until 2039 and remain at a high level through at least 2042. By 2042, 11,612 staff, or 54.3 per cent of all current staff in departments/offices, regional commissions and tribunals, will have retired. In peacekeeping operations, special political missions and other political presences, and the resident coordinator system, 9,319 staff are forecast to retire by 2042, representing 60.4 per cent of the total staff at these entities (ibid., paras. 57 and 58).

37. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 32 of its resolution 77/278, noted the increase in the average age of staff in the United Nations workforce, as well as the high forecast level of retirements, and stressed the need for an accelerated process to rejuvenate the Organization. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to propose, for its consideration at the first part of its resumed seventy-ninth session, a comprehensive approach to recruit and retain talent with new perspectives and the required skills, including through outreach, the internship programme, the Junior Professional Officers Programme and the young professionals programme, and by increasing the number of entry-level Professional posts (P-1 to P-3) while reducing the number of senior-level posts (D-1 and above) through downward job reclassification or abolishment, as appropriate, and by taking advantage of upcoming retirements, so as not to increase the overall post resource

requirements. The Committee also recalls that the Assembly, in its resolution [78/252](#), requested the Secretary-General to improve the rejuvenation of the Secretariat through strategic workforce and succession planning for all posts that were vacant or would become vacant owing to upcoming retirements and to take measures to increase entry-level posts and decrease high-level posts, and for downward reclassification of existing vacant posts and to report on the measures taken and results achieved at the seventy-ninth session. **The Advisory Committee stresses the importance of the Secretary-General intensifying his efforts to attract and retain young talent, especially from underrepresented and unrepresented Member States, including through targeted outreach. The Committee looks forward to receiving the information as requested by the General Assembly (resolutions [77/278](#), para. 32, and [78/252](#), para. 30) and trusts that details on targets, monitoring and accountability mechanisms as well as interlinkages with ongoing and planned efforts in furtherance of various human resource management goals will also be provided (see also para. 26 above).**

38. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on several efforts and initiatives that the Secretariat was currently undertaking and planning to advance the goal of rejuvenating the Secretariat workforce, including: the continuation of the programmes for Junior Professional Officers, young professionals, National Professional Officers and interns, which served as pipelines for attracting youth; talent outreach programmes, through partnerships with national academic institutions and diverse recruitment platforms, targeting candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States; policy reviews, particularly in the context of the staff selection 2.0 programme, aimed at removing barriers that hindered young applicants by modernizing job descriptions, advancing skills-based recruitment, simplifying the application process and making a variety of assessment methods available to hiring managers; and the consideration of factors such as work-life balance and flexibility, the use of innovative technologies, continuous learning and development, mentoring and inclusive decision-making, as well as the re-examination over time of the compensation package, its continued relevance or whether modification might be warranted, such as the inclusion of an employee recognition and rewards programme. **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to assess the efficiency of the current administrative practices of the young professionals programme and report thereon in the context of his next report, including on possible measures to improve it (resolution [77/278](#), para. 33).**

## 8. Average length of service

39. As at 31 December 2022, the average length of service was 9.9 years, reflecting no change compared with the prior reporting period ([A/78/569](#), table 16). The longest average length of service was 17.1 years, observed at the G-7 level, as staff members in the General Service and related categories can only be recruited to the Professional and higher categories through a competitive examination with very small placement limits and not through the staff selection system (*ibid.*, para. 52). The Advisory Committee makes related observations in its report on the proposal on the movement of Secretariat staff from the General Service category to the Professional category ([A/78/745/Add.1](#)).

40. In the Professional and higher categories, the highest average length of service was at the P-5 and D-1 levels (on average 13.7 and 13.0 years, respectively) and, excluding staff at the P-1 level, the lowest was at the P-2 level, with an average of 3.9 years of service (3.5 for women and 4.5 for men), decreasing slightly, by 0.4 years, compared with the prior reporting year ([A/78/569](#), table 16). Data contained in the report and information provided upon enquiry to the Advisory Committee show that

the overall number of separations at the P-2 level increased by 8.3 per cent in 2022 compared with 2021 and that the resignation rate at the P-2 level is higher than the Secretariat average (see para. 41 below). Furthermore, the vacancy rates at the P-2 and P-3 levels were higher than the vacancy rates at the P-4 and P-5 levels, which may indicate higher fluctuations among more junior staff, who may change jobs more frequently.

## 9. Resignations

41. In response to the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 44 of its resolution [77/278](#), the report of the Secretary-General provides an expanded analysis of resignations. Of the total 962 resignations in 2022, 646 were by staff members holding fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointments (excluding Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and Junior Professional Officers) who resigned for reasons other than early retirement. The 962 resignations represent an increase of 18.9 per cent compared with 2021, attributable to the emergence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and an increase of 12.4 per cent compared with 2018. In addition, the overall resignation rate (i.e. the percentage of resignations among the comparable all-staff population) increased from 1.7 per cent in 2018 to 1.9 per cent in 2022 ([A/78/569](#), para. 84). The analysis presented in the report includes the following:

(a) As regards gender, for each of the five reporting years from 2018 to 2022, overall, more men than women resigned. However, in the Professional category, the rate at which women resigned was higher than men, with a resignation rate of 2.1 per cent for women compared with 1.6 per cent for men, with a steady difference in the resignation rates over the five years (*ibid.*, para. 85);

(b) In the Professional and higher categories in 2022, resignation rates at the P-2, P-3 and D-2 levels were above the average of 1.9 per cent for the Secretariat, particularly for women (*ibid.*, table 29). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, while the resignation rate at the P-2 level was higher than the Secretariat average, it remained within a reasonable range;

(c) Staff members who were 44 years of age or younger at the time of resignation resigned at a higher rate than those who were 45 years of age or older in each of the five years (*ibid.*, para. 89);

(d) The Western European and other States had the largest resignation rate of all the regional groups during the five reporting periods with 2.7 per cent in 2022, nearly double that of other groups and above the average resignation rate of 2.0 per cent for the five-year period (*ibid.*, para. 91). The African States had the lowest resignation rates in the five-year period (*ibid.*, para. 92).

42. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates, that, overall, the trend showing an increase in resignations of staff in 2022 in the population in question calls for continued monitoring to determine whether it might simply reflect a rebound from the artificially low resignation numbers seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Secretariat, the level of resignations does not necessitate an intervention at present, as resignation rates remained within comparative numbers. A global approach to exit interviews is currently under development and should offer insights into reasons for resignation decisions among particular groups and allow for preventative actions to be taken, as applicable (*ibid.*, para. 93). The Advisory Committee was informed that the Department of Operational Support was reviewing existing separation data with specific emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism and would issue recommendations regarding exit surveys, data collection and reporting, including on trends and risk groups. Furthermore, the creation of a standardized exit survey/interview template was expected to continue until 2024. **The**



Advisory Committee again stresses the need for a more systematic and comprehensive data collection on resignations, and the reasons thereof, to enable better trend analysis, identify challenges and strengthen the Organization's operational workforce planning in support of human resources management objectives. In this respect, the Committee is of the view that greater efforts should be made to expedite the completion of comprehensive standardized exit interview templates and to consistently conduct relevant and credible exit interviews across the Secretariat. The Committee trusts that information thereon will be included in the next composition report.

#### 10. Internal and external appointments

43. In the report of the Secretary-General, internal recruitments are defined as promotions, reassignments and transfers of staff serving in the Organization at the time of their movement into a new position. External recruitments are defined as staff recruitments resulting either in initial appointments (i.e. new staff who have been appointed to the Secretariat for the first time) or reappointments (i.e. new staff who have had a prior appointment but separated from service and were not serving staff members at the time of their recruitment). It is also indicated in the report that reappointments include staff moves from a temporary appointment to a fixed-term appointment, which may occur back-to-back but require a separation nonetheless (i.e. they may be separated for one day and reappointed the following day). These reappointments are considered external recruitment, as the new staff member is for the first time recruited through the staff selection system ([A/78/569](#), paras. 62 and 64).

44. As at 31 December 2022, of a total of 9,410 recruitments, 4,005 (42.6 per cent) were internal recruitments and 5,405 (57.4 per cent) were external recruitments (*ibid.*, tables 21 and 22). The 4,005 internal recruitments made in 2022 mainly comprise reassignments (2,092, an increase of 21.5 per cent as compared with 2021) and promotions (1,333, an increase of 12.5 per cent from 2021) (*ibid.*, para. 65). The 5,405 external recruitments made in 2022 reflect the highest number over the five-year period (*ibid.*, figure XVIII). It is noted, however, that this figure included 2,611 initial appointments and 2,090 reappointments. Compared with 2021, initial appointments represented a 39.9 per cent increase and reappointments reflected an increase of 15.2 per cent (*ibid.*, paras. 63 and 64 and table 21). **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, when considering applicants for vacancies, to give equal treatment to internal and external candidates and to provide the percentage of internal and external candidates selected in the context of future reports (resolution [77/278](#), para. 13). To promote further transparency and clarity, the Committee recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide further clarification on the definition of reappointments and to present, in his future reports, information on reappointments for every stage of the recruitment process as a separate category from external appointments.**

45. In 2022, there were 3,790 job openings posted in Inspira for which, on average, 106 applications were received. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with table 4, which contains information on the number and percentage of applications at each of the recruitment stages by regional group in the Director, Professional and Field Service categories for the period 2018–2022.

Table 4

**Number and breakdown of applications, by stage of the recruitment process and regional group, for job openings posted in the Secretariat in 2018–2022 in the Director, Professional and Field Service categories**

	<i>African States</i>	<i>Asia-Pacific States</i>	<i>Eastern European States</i>	<i>Latin American and Caribbean States</i>	<i>Western European and other States</i>
<i>Number</i>					
Applications	696 628	399 106	139 921	121 502	518 882
Screened-in applications	327 509	218 795	87 527	69 770	331 460
Assessed applications	31 347	18 197	7 846	6 732	35 682
Recommended applications	9 653	5 633	2 742	2 026	12 553
Selections	2 347	1 782	900	823	4 331
<i>Percentage</i>					
Applications	37.1	21.3	7.5	6.5	27.7
Screened-in applications	31.6	21.1	8.5	6.7	32.0
Assessed applications	31.4	18.2	7.9	6.7	35.8
Recommended applications	29.6	17.3	8.4	6.2	38.5
Selections	23.0	17.5	8.8	8.1	42.5

46. The Advisory Committee previously noted that the correlation between the number of applications and successful applicants did not fully align with the data provided by the Secretariat for the period 2016–2020 and that imbalances appeared to occur overwhelmingly at the selection stage of the recruitment process (see [A/77/728](#), para. 23). A similar trend can be observed in table 4. The regional group with the highest percentage of applications (37.1 per cent) had a lower percentage of selections (23.0 per cent) compared with another regional group with a lower percentage of applications (27.7 per cent) attaining the highest percentage of selections (42.5 per cent). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to identify and address the factors causing discrepancies in the selection process, including as they may relate to the selection criteria and geographical representation in selection panels, review bodies, hiring managers and rosters. The Committee looks forward to receiving detailed information on how the staff selection 2.0 programme may address the discrepancies in the context of its next report on human resources management (see para. 47 below).**

### III. Other matters

#### *Update of the staff selection system*

47. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 9 of its resolution [77/278](#), recognized the Secretary-General's intent to update the Secretariat's staff selection system, including through the staff selection 2.0 programme, in accordance with Articles 97 and 101 of the Charter, to improve the overall human resources management, to ensure a recruitment system that is effective, fair, efficient and agile, and to enable the Organization to have a diverse workforce, and requested the Secretary-General to provide detailed information on changes to staff selection at each and all phases of the recruitment process, including an analysis of the impact on recruitment practices, projected timelines, resources required, the designation of central and individual roles and responsibilities for the recruitment process, and the transition from current applicant qualification requirements (work

experience and education) in the job openings to the inclusion of the knowledge, skills and abilities required, with the aim to ensure merit-based selection, increase objectivity, avoid bias and be fair to all applicants.

48. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Secretariat anticipated that the staff selection 2.0 programme, including necessary policy, process and technology changes, would be completed by 2026. The Committee recalls that the Secretary-General requested and was granted additional resources to scale up efforts and properly manage and deliver project results by 2026 (see [A/78/7](#), para. VIII.12, and resolution [78/252](#)). Work has progressed in various areas, including with the development of a new job analysis methodology and several new job profiles. According to the Secretariat, the programme is aimed at addressing systematically and holistically issues in the current staff selection system, including those stemming from different educational systems, language requirements and lengthy recruitment processes, which pose challenges towards equitable geographical distribution and rejuvenation goals. **The Advisory Committee looks forward to receiving comprehensive information on the staff selection 2.0 programme, including on how the programme envisages achieving its intended goals and addressing long-standing human resources issues, in the next report of the Secretary-General on human resources management (see also resolution [78/252](#), para. 9).**

49. Regarding language requirements in vacancy announcements, the Advisory Committee was informed that at present applicants were screened automatically based on how they subjectively judged and indicated their level of language proficiency in their application and that the lack of a mechanism for verifying language competence more objectively might have an adverse impact on diversity in the pool of applicants and lead to unnecessary barriers or exclusion. The Secretariat had therefore embarked on a project to provide standardized and industry-standard means to determine linguistic requisites stated in job openings and assess applicants' proficiency during the staff selection process in alignment with the United Nations Language Framework ([ST/SGB/2023/2](#)). **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide updated information on language requirements, including on the rationale for certain requirements, challenges in the recruitment process, progress made and anticipated results, in the next report of the Secretary-General on human resources management.**

50. Regarding recruitment timelines, which are included in the senior managers' compacts as a key indicator in the accountability framework, the Advisory Committee was again informed that, due to the ongoing absence of a system linkage between Umoja and Inspira, it was not possible to report on the time taken from the establishment of a post to the date at which the selected individual reported for duty (see also [A/77/728](#), para. 51). The Committee was therefore provided with the average number of calendar days for selections in 2020, 2021 and 2022 for job openings at the Field Service, Professional and D-1 levels (see table 5).

Table 5  
**Average number of calendar days for selections for 2020, 2021 and 2022 at the Field Service, Professional and D-1 levels**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Selections</i>	<i>Average days from posting to selection</i>
2020	1 403	165
2021	2 021	183
2022	2 283	157
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 707</b>	<b>168</b>

51. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that the 120-day target for recruitment timelines continued not to be met and recalls that the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to develop and undertake concrete measures to increase efficiency and tackle the root causes of delays in its staff selection process, based on concrete analysis of each stage of the recruitment process to reduce recruitment timelines and meet the 120-day target (resolution [77/278](#), para. 14; see also para. 16 above). The Committee trusts that information thereon will be provided in the next report of the Secretary-General on human resources management.

*Staff administered by the United Nations Development Programme*

52. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 December 2022, 1,951 Secretariat staff were administered by UNDP, compared with 1,890 as at 31 December 2021 and 2,553 as at 31 December 2020. A breakdown provided to the Committee indicates that, while these staff members were mainly serving as General Service staff and National Professional Officers, 49 were in the Professional and higher categories, including 2 Assistant Secretaries-General. The Committee was previously informed that staff administration by UNDP had been used historically in locations where recruitment and staff administration tasks could not be performed in legacy systems and that these obstacles had been removed with the roll-out of Umoja (see [A/77/729](#), para. 26). The Committee recalls that the Board of Auditors recommended that the Administration continue to support entities in expediting the process of integrating UNDP-administered staff into the Secretariat in a progressive and seamless manner, with due regard to ensuring transparency and fairness of the selection process, in accordance with the Organization's regulatory framework ([A/78/5 \(Vol. I\)](#), chap. II, para. 330; see also [A/77/5 \(Vol. I\)](#), chap. II, para. 278). The estimated target date for the implementation of this recommendation was the second quarter of 2024 ([A/78/333](#), para. 93), which shifted from the previously expected target of fourth quarter of 2023 ([A/77/322](#), para. 83). **The Advisory Committee encourages the Secretariat to make greater efforts to complete the expeditious integration of the remaining UNDP-administered staff into the Secretariat, particularly for the high-level posts, and trusts that information thereon will be provided in the next report on the composition of the Secretariat.** The Committee discussed related matters in its most recent report on the Board of Auditors ([A/78/578](#)).

*Consolidated information on the total Secretariat workforce*

53. The report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics is prepared annually, while his report on the composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff, consultants and individual contractors is prepared biennially. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Secretariat envisioned providing, over the coming years, consolidated information about the Secretariat workforce, which would cover staff and non-staff personnel, and adding the data provided in the report on gratis personnel, retired staff, consultants and individual contractors to the new United Nations Secretariat Workforce Portal. This was not possible at present, given the effort to manually collect, collate, clean and combine the non-staff data for official reporting. As a first step to address this challenge, the Secretariat embarked on efforts to require that all entry of data on gratis personnel, consultants and individual contractors be done in enterprise-wide systems, rather than in entity-specific databases. **The Advisory Committee looks forward to the envisaged provision of consolidated information on the totality of the Secretariat workforce, including both staff and non-staff personnel, and trusts that an update will be provided in the next composition report.**

### *Junior Professional Officers*

54. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on the regional group and gender of Junior Professional Officers over the past 10 years, as summarized in table 6.

Table 6

**Junior Professional Officers, by regional group and gender, 1 January 2013–1 January 2023**

<i>Regional group</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
African States	18	14	32
Asia-Pacific States	185	120	305
Eastern European States	12	5	17
Latin American and Caribbean States	1	–	1
Western European and other States	535	266	801
<b>Total</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>1 156</b>

55. The Advisory Committee recalls the voluntary sponsorship by a few donor countries<sup>1</sup> of some candidates for Junior Professional Officer from developing countries, as well as the planned launch of a multi-agency developing country candidates trust fund for that purpose (see [A/78/7](#), para. IV.29), and trusts that the Secretary-General will encourage greater Member State participation and provide updated information to the General Assembly in his next programme budget report and human resources management reports.

### *Mobility*

56. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution [77/278](#), took note of the decision of the Secretary-General to implement annual mobility exercises through a new, consolidated approach to staff mobility starting in 2023 and requested the Secretary-General to report at the first part of its resumed seventy-ninth session details on the policy and progress of implementation of the new consolidated mobility framework (resolution [77/278](#), paras. 17 and 18). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the first annual global mobility exercise within the new framework was launched on 1 November 2023. A total of 934 potentially eligible staff members voluntarily opted in to the first exercise, and it was expected that staff would start moving to their new positions in different duty stations in mid-2024. The Committee was further informed that mobility, which involved staff members who already served in the Organization, might not have a significant impact on the overall progress towards equitable geographical distribution but might affect data at entity levels. However, during the matching exercise, the nationality of staff members would be taken into account to ensure that entities had a diverse workforce. **The Advisory Committee looks forward to receiving information on the implementation of the new mobility framework in the next report of the Secretary-General on human resources management (see also resolution [77/278](#), para. 18), including on incentives to encourage mobility between headquarters and field duty stations, also for senior staff, as well as an analysis of the envisaged impact of the new mobility approach to other human resources management objectives.**

<sup>1</sup> Belgium, Italy, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and Switzerland sponsored a combined total of 29 Junior Professional Officers from developing countries over the past five years ([A/78/7](#), para. IV.29).

*Performance management*

57. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a summary of the latest available distribution of staff performance ratings by entity, as at 4 August 2022. Data provided indicate that 13,173 staff exceeded expectations, 17,888 successfully met expectations, 156 partially met expectations and 19 did not meet expectations. In total, 17 Secretariat staff were separated due to unsatisfactory service over the period 2019–2023 (5 had permanent appointments, 3 had continuing appointments and 9 had fixed-term appointments). Furthermore, the data provided seem to indicate wide disparities in the usage of the two highest ratings across the different entities. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen performance management throughout the Organization, including through the performance appraisal system and improved performance management skills of managers, to promote effectiveness and accountability, including for underperformance, and to sustain a high performance and results-orientated culture. The Assembly also encouraged the Secretary-General to ensure that the culture of the Organization incentivized high performance and dealt effectively with underperformance, and that staff career progression was strongly linked to good performance (resolution 77/278, paras. 37 and 38). The Committee discusses matters related to performance management in its report on the thirteenth progress report on accountability: strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat (A/78/743).

*Probation*

58. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that a draft policy document on a probationary period for new hires was being prepared for submission to all relevant stakeholders, including staff representatives, and in accordance with the relevant procedures. According to the proposal, based on a performance review to be completed before the end of the first year of an initial fixed-term appointment: (a) the appointment may be confirmed and extended in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules; (b) the probationary period may be extended for an additional year; or (c) the appointment may not be renewed. The Committee notes that probationary periods usually cover a period spanning from three to six months and may extend up to one year. **The Advisory Committee therefore does not see merit in an extension of the proposed probationary period for an additional year. The Committee also trusts that more information on the proposal to introduce a probationary period will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and in the next report of the Secretary-General on human resources management, including on the progress made and envisaged timelines and previous experiences with probationary periods within the Secretariat.**

## IV. Conclusion

59. The General Assembly is invited to take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/78/569, para. 124). **Subject to its observations and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General.**