**CONCLUSIONS OF THE HIGH LEVEL
COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT (HLCM)
AT ITS FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 2000**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York
11-12 December 2000**

HLCM held its first regular session of 2000 at UN Headquarters on 11 and 12 December. The agenda of the session was as follows:

I.   Structure, functioning and secretariat support of HLCM and those entities reporting thereto.

II.   Future work programme

III. Current concerns for effective recruitment

IV. Other business

Opening

1.   In opening the session, the Secretary of ACC drew HLCM's attention to the conclusions of ACC's October 2000 session in respect of the structure and functioning of ACC. He referred to a communication dated 7 December 2000 he had addressed, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to the Executive Heads concerning appointments to the bureaus of the two new High-Level Committees. In this connection, he noted that the names of Mr. Joseph Connor, Under-Secretary-General for Department for Management of the United Nations, and Mr. David Waller, Deputy Director-General of IAEA had been proposed to serve as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the High Level Committee on Management respectively for a two-year term. He also informed the Committee that Mr. Roger Eggleston would serve as its Secretary.

2.   The Committee unanimously welcomed these proposals. Mr. Connor and Mr. Waller were thus elected as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of HLCM respectively for a period of two years.

I.   Structure, functioning and secretariat support for HLCM and those entities reporting thereto (HLCM/2000/R.1 to R.4)

3.   In carrying out a review of its functioning, the Committee recalled its Terms of Reference approved by ACC at is Fall 2000 meeting and in particular the following extract:

"HLCM acts on behalf of and in the name of ACC on matters affecting the administrative management of all member organizations, both multi-sectoral and specific to a given area.

 "It is charged with identifying and analyzing administrative management issues of common concern, which require a system-wide response. It is authorized to take decisions on behalf of the Executive Heads and to identify, promote and coordinate management reforms that will improve services, achieve productivity improvements and increase efficiency and effectiveness across the United Nations system. It is also responsible for:

- Ensuring the frank sharing of knowledge and experiences in order to enable organizations to profit from best practices;

- Facilitating the continuing dialogue on the reform processes and the management of change underway in the organizations of the system;

4.   It also took note that the ACC decision called for a zero-based approach in reviewing its subsidiary machinery, i.e., the starting point should be what needs to be done at the inter-agency level in areas of system-wide concern rather than what was being done at present. It further noted the ACC request for a thorough analysis of areas requiring system-wide inter-agency collaboration and the need to identify the most suitable mechanisms to achieve such collaboration bearing in mind ACC's wish that permanent bodies should be kept to a minimum and their retention should be based on rigorous criteria.

5.   It concluded that, whilst the manner in which the work of the committees which had, until then, been reporting directly or indirectly to ACC would relate to or interface with that of HLCM might differ, some elements were common.

6.   In all cases, the new arrangements should:

(i)   obviate the need for any standing committees;

(ii)   require adequate 'cross-over' in membership between the HLCM and meetings of specialists;

(iii)   call for strong support from the unified ACC secretariat.

7.   Hence, while meetings of a variety of specialists should continue, their work should be closely linked to the work programme of HLCM in order *inter alia* to ensure that issues which cut across different substantive areas were dealt with in a strategic and coherent manner. In this way, HLCM would be able to take account of any competing priorities which might otherwise impede progress in a given area.

8.   HLCM considered further that in respect of the work in the substantive areas under review (HR, financial and ICT management), the following would apply.

9.   In respect of work in the Human Resources Management (HRM) area:

➢ Issues on the current work programme of the HR Directors would be pursued through Task Forces.

➢ However, on behalf of ACC/HLCM, common system HR directors would meet immediately before sessions of ICSC – normally for not more than three days – to review all matters under consideration by ICSC, determine common positions to put forward before ICSC, select their spokesperson(s) and authorize them to make representations on behalf of ACC/HLCM and determine what mechanisms would be set in place to react to developments which might take place during the course of ICSC so as to enable organizations' representatives to be present only for issues of interest to their organizations.

➢ On the basis of specific requests from HLCM, the HR directors could also review policy issues of common concern on the occasion of their pre-ICSC meeting.

➢ A member of HLCM would be designated to participate in the HR Directors' meetings.

10.   In respect of work in the budget and finance areas:

➢ Issues in the budget and finance areas would be pursued in future through Task Forces.

➢ However, Budget and Finance Directors (as appropriate and relevant to the subject matter) could hold short agenda-driven meetings if they so wished to exchange views on financial policy issues and to deal with any other issues which in their opinion requires discussion by their meeting together.

➢ Different types of budgeting arrangements (regular, voluntary and to some degree commercial) would also be more fully evaluated and compared.

➢ A member of HLCM would be designated to participate in the meeting of Budget and Finance Directors.

11.   <u>In respect of work in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) area:</u>

➢ HLCM would itself be responsible for moving forward strategic ICT concerns and, to this end, would review these at each of its sessions at which a Chief Information Officer (CIO) (i.e. an executive information and technology officer from one of the system's organizations) would be invited to exchange information on ICT trends across the system

➢ ICT Task Forces should focus on:

o those issues which would have a strategic impact on the UN family as a whole;

o issues in which inter-agency intervention would make a difference, e.g. best practices in production, dissemination of documentation electronically;

o assisting HLCM in determining what future changes in ICT could be anticipated and how these could be planned for within the UN family;

o frank exchanges of information on successes and failures in technological developments;

o issues which linked ICT to other management areas (HR, payroll, procurement, management information, etc.).

➢ A member of HLCM would be designated to participate in ICT managers' agenda-driven meetings.

II.   Future work programme (HLCM/1/CRP.3)

12.   HLCM took note of the work programmes currently underway in three substantive areas (Human Resources, Finance and Budget and Information and Communication Technology). It requested the secretariat to merge these with the work of HLCM, establishing time lines and output indicators for each activity in developing a forward-looking, coherent (i.e. non-overlapping) strategic management work programme.

13. After an analysis of key concerns and building on the activities referred to above, the Committee concluded that its work should focus on the following five priority areas:

(a) ZERO NOMINAL GROWTH – its impact on organizations of the UN system

(b) CAPITALIZING ON TECHNOLOGY – the management of crosscutting ICT concerns across the system and the identification of issues which will make a strategic impact and lead to efficiencies and savings.

(c) SIMPLIFICATION – in procedures, processes and entitlements

(d) SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYABILITY – the fact that a life-long career would no longer be the employment model and the consequences thereof for conditions of employment, contractual policy, exit strategies and the like.

(e) STAFF SECURITY

14. The secretariat was requested to prepare short position papers in each of these areas for the Committee's consideration.

15. To carry out the work programme, HLCM agreed that a dedicated web site of members should be established to ensure continuing consultations among them. Bulletin Boards in priority areas would also be created. The secretariat would be responsible for these technological initiatives and for actively maintaining exchanges among HLCM members.

16. In this connection, HLCM noted that the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs in New York and the various inter-agency secretariats in Geneva would henceforth be merged into a single ACC secretariat with offices in both locations. Budgetary levels for the single secretariat for the biennium 2002-2003 would remain the same as those for the current biennium.

17. HLCM further noted that the work of the secretariat was, by its very nature, multi-skilled. Hence, the competencies required in each secretariat post would need to be carefully developed. In this connection, it would also be important to complement the core staff with others on loan from organizations – a matter which would also be signalled for ACC's attention. Consultant support could also be added to the core secretariat to ensure that capabilities in all management areas were maintained.

18. In discussions relating to the development of its future work programme, HLCM considered that two clarifications in respect of paragraph 5 of its Terms of Reference were warranted. First, reference to interaction with the Chairpersons of ACABQ and ICSC was not intended to be restrictive; contacts with the Chairpersons of other entities such as the JIU and the Board of Auditors were also foreseen. Second, the reference to ongoing dialogue with the staff representatives on concerns of a system-wide nature was seen to be a key component of HLCM's future sessions; it therefore requested its secretariat to put forward proposals as to how best fruitful dialogue with staff representatives could be maximized.

III. Current concerns for effective recruitment (HLCM/2000/R.5 and HLCM/1/CRP.4)

19.   In considering the question of recruitment, the Chairperson invited HLCM members to suggest innovative changes which *inter alia* would speed up the recruitment process. Among the ideas put forward were:

-       more creative job advertisements;
-       use of generic job descriptions;
-       rostering/pooling of pre-screened applicants;
-       using headhunters;
-       use of "remote" Assessment centers;
-       simplification of processes;
-       improved "work" environments;
-       focusing on lower level recruitments based on pools/rosters;
-       making employment conditions more competitive.

20.   Arising out of its discussion, HLCM requested the secretariat to prepare a position paper which would (a) elaborate how organizations might pursue these suggestions for improvement, (b) identify those organizations within and outside the UN system which had introduced such processes and (c) analyse the outcome of such initiatives.

IV.   Other business

21.   HLCM confirmed that its 2001 session would be held in Geneva; the exact dates were to be determined but the meeting would most probably take place in September.