We thank the Secretariat for the annual report on human resources.

Seychelles is pleased to note that the first experience in the implementation of the WHO geographical mobility policy, currently on a voluntary basis, is positive. We agree that there are benefits to the scheme and that personnel movement across regions and between Headquarters and regions can improve cross-fertilisation, energise professional staff and promote the One WHO vision. We note the progressive implementation of the scheme to eventually becoming a mandatory scheme and look forward to the regular reports on progress. We urge the Secretariat to ensure that the evaluation is not merely a count of the number of movements. The focus should be on the impact on performance and effectiveness.

We note the gender imbalance among professional and higher categories and the variation in male to female ratio among the regions. We recognise the effort that WHO is making to encourage the employment of women professionals, with a specific target set for the current biennium. Noting the variation among regions, it is clear that greater effort needs to be deployed.

Similarly, we request more attention be given to the representation of all Member States in WHO. Currently one third of Member States are either unrepresented or under-represented in the international professional staff category. We also note the uneven participation by Member States in the internship programme. The benefits of exposure to the work of WHO for young people and professionals at the start of their career should be better promoted and the scheme given greater support and offered more systematically.

Human resources are at the centre of WHO's strength and effectiveness, and the professional and other staff of our organisation don't often get the recognition and appreciation they deserve. Let me express the gratitude and appreciation of the Seychelles delegation to all the staff serving throughout the Organization.