



## **United States Mission to the United Nations**

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**Statement by Ambassador Joseph Torsella  
On the Organization of Work of the Fifth Committee  
at the First Resumed Session of the 66<sup>th</sup> GA  
March 5, 2012**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We meet after a historic main session where we all came together to take a noteworthy decision on a more responsible budget for the 2012-2013 biennium in a time of worldwide fiscal constrain. We commend the Secretary-General for his leadership and we are hopeful that the organization will continue its efforts towards more responsible stewardship of resources and higher standards of performance and outcomes.

So our first task in 2012 is to apply the Hippocratic Oath in the Fifth Committee: First, do no harm. We must continue to be vigilant during the biennium to realize the gains we made in December. In that regard, we look forward to seeing structural and sustainable management reforms in 2012, and to building on the foundation we established in December.

In our discussions this session on accountability, air travel, limited budgetary discretion for the Secretary General, increased transparency through the public disclosure of OIOS audit reports and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, we have the opportunity to advance key parts of an agenda for reform that should be shared by all who want to strengthen, rather than weaken, this institution. This is a chance for the Committee to take important steps to move the United Nations forward and enhance confidence and trust of stakeholders in the Organization.

Apart from the specific reform issues before us, this Committee must also continue to make clear to the Secretariat the importance of keeping the renovation of the United Nations on track in relation to the project schedule and budget. We are carefully considering the proposal the Secretary-General has put forward on additional sources of financing for the project and look forward to discussing it in the context of updated information on the project status.

In addition, we look forward to hearing an update on the feasibility study for the UN Headquarters long-term accommodation and the options the UN is pursuing. My delegation believes the UN must develop further detailed information on all alternatives, and provide information on underlying need, in order to enable the Committee to make an informed decision on the future footprint of the United Nations in New York. In that vein, we encourage the Secretariat to move forward with the discussions necessary to provide a full cost-benefit analysis of all various options without prejudice to any decision the General Assembly may make.

In regards to the financing of unforeseen and extraordinary expenses arising from resolutions and decisions of the Human Rights Council, we believe the ACABQ has given the Committee a wise recommendation which should be allowed to work before changing to another funding mechanism.

Another issue that my delegation is studying closely is the pension schemes for the members of the International Court of Justice and judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The United States acknowledges the historic work these judges have done under difficult circumstances, but in changing pension schemes, we must consider what is best for the United Nations as a whole.

While we will be making a separate statement on the proposal by the Under Secretary General of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to publicly disclose audit reports, we welcome this proposal and Ms. Lapointe's commitment to further transparency at the UN. In addition, we look forward to considering the Secretary General's report regarding accountability. We believe continued focus must be given to the Organization's efforts and commitment to integrating an accountability culture across the Secretariat.

In other matters, my delegation was dismayed to learn of the lack of implementation of Res/66/246 and the General Assembly's directives on advancing the enterprise resource planning project. We were very concerned over the lack of leadership of the project which contributed to project delays. However, we commend the Secretary General for moving quickly to appoint a well-qualified interim director, Mr. Ernesto Baca of the World Food Program. We are hopeful that under his leadership this important project will be brought back on track and advanced in the way Member States envisioned.

Turning to another oversight body—the Joint Inspection Unit—it is well known within this Committee that the United States strongly supports reform of the Unit. A revitalized JIU would create more opportunities for strengthening accountability and effectiveness throughout the UN system. Unfortunately, the JIU's analysis of reform progress and options for enhancing its effectiveness fall short of expectations. The Unit fails to propose the kind of bold and far reaching reforms that would make it more influential and effective in promoting results and accountability at UN organizations.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we reiterate the importance of the principle of consensus in the Fifth Committee. We recall that the General Assembly first established the imperative of consensus in this committee in response to calls for even more dramatic changes, with the intent of ensuring that in this Committee budgetary decisions could not simply be imposed by one group on another, and that any outcome would meet with approval of all interests – south and north, small and large alike. We reaffirm our commitment to achieving such true, meaningful and voluntary consensus as the only legitimate basis for decisions of this Committee, and we therefore look forward to working with colleagues on each of the issues in a constructive manner and concluding the session within the time allotted.

Thank you.