



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY H. E. AMBASSADOR MOURAD BENMEHIDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77,
ON AGENDA ITEM 132: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE
AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS: ACCOUNTABILITY.
AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH
COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, 13 March 2012

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 132: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, on the important issue of Accountability.
2. The Group would first like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Management, Ms. Angela Kane, for introducing the Secretary-General's report, A/66/692 entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 64/259" and the Chairman of the ACABQ, Mr. Collen Kelapile, for introducing the Advisory Committee's report, A/66/738.
3. We further wish to thank the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit, Mr. Mohamed Mounir Zahran, for introducing the reports of the Unit on accountability frameworks in the United Nations system (A/66/710), on transparency in the selection and appointment of senior managers in the United Nations Secretariat (A/66/380) and on the review of enterprise risk management in the United Nations system (A/65/788). The information provided by the JIU is signal of the important and relevant role the Unit has as an external oversight body.
4. The Group will also consider the Secretary-General's related reports A/66/710/Add.1; A/66/380/Add.1 and A/65/788/Add.1.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The Group of 77 and China has considered the Secretary-General's report, which was expected to respond to the requests of the General Assembly, as reflected in its resolution A/RES/64/259, and to present comprehensive information on the progress of the Organization towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat.
6. The Group of 77 and China wishes to recall that, as per the above-mentioned resolution, the definition of accountability is, inter alia, "the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honouring their commitments, without qualification or exception. Accountability includes achieving objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, in fully implementing and delivering on all mandates to the Secretariat approved by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies..."

7. Against this backdrop, the Group of 77 and China is deeply concerned that these basic and fundamental professional principles for international civil servants have not been fully upheld by the Organization's leadership. Time and again, the Group of 77 and China has underscored the importance for the Secretary-General to lead by example. It is with consternation that we concur with the ACABQ that his failure to hold senior managers to account has a negative impact on setting the standards of accountability throughout the Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The report of the Secretary-General falls short of expectations, since it did not address the specific issues spelled out in the General Assembly resolution 64/259. Although the report provides a description of the administrative policies, procedures, tools and systems implemented, or envisaged for implementation, under the each of the areas of the accountability framework, it provides few details on the accountability measures themselves, their underlying principles, the weaknesses they are intended to address, the timetable for their implementation, or the next steps envisaged.

9. The G77 would have also preferred to have information on the mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the application of the measures enumerated in the report, the indicators and performance data used to measure progress, and an analysis of their effectiveness in terms of strengthening accountability.

10. Several of these problems have been highlighted by the ACABQ in its comments. Those problems constitute a real weakness in the Secretary-General's report. Notwithstanding the Secretary-General's affirmation that progress was achieved in strengthening accountability, the absence of details on the matter at hand gives the impression of poor commitment in implementing an effective accountability system.

11. The assertions of the G77 and China are more relevant, when the report shows no progress with regard to two essential pillars of any comprehensive accountability framework, namely performance reporting and results-based management. This serious shortcoming in the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 64/259 represents yet another example of lack of willingness to foster a strong culture of accountability throughout the Secretariat.

12. In this regard, the Group is all the more concerned at the link being drawn between the foregoing and the implementation of the change management initiative by the Secretary-General. The Group wishes to voice yet again its consternation over the multitude of initiatives being implemented without any legislative mandate when they clearly fall under the purview of the General Assembly. In that context, the Group of 77 and China formally requests that the change management report be distributed under this agenda item for its proper consideration by the General Assembly so as to build indeed the trust being called for by the Secretary-General between the Member States and the Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman,

13. The Group has observed that some elements in the Secretariat have demonstrated a sense of detachment from their responsibilities towards the whole Membership of the Organization.

More than once we have been presented with a *fait accompli*, reflecting only the interests and views of some Member States.

14. In the recent past months we have witnessed all sorts of rivalries among senior managers and, more worryingly, several attempts - as previously stated - to usurp the intergovernmental process on issues that clearly belong to the realm of the decisions to be made by Member States.

15. Undoubtedly, in case is the appalling crisis that Umoja, the Enterprise Resource Planning project, had to face for nearly 10 months. As emphasized by the ACABQ, this case clearly represents an example of failure of accountability and also illustrates the lack of application of the principles, mechanisms and methods of accountability in the day-to-day management of activities in the Organisation. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China requests that a full review of the causes and circumstances that led to the crisis be carried out and that sanctions commensurate to the faults be imposed.

Mr. Chairman,

16. The Group of 77 and China has concerns and comments regarding the different aspects of the report of the Secretary-General and the state of affairs related to accountability in the Organization. It is also our intention to take fully into account the recommendations made by the JIU in the reports presented before us.

17. Given that the process of implementing an effective accountability system in the United Nations is a continual and ongoing exercise, the Group of 77 and China endorses the ACABQ's recommendation of requesting the Secretary-General to submit an annual report on progress made towards the implementation of the accountability framework for the consideration of the General Assembly.

18. The Group of 77 and China remains strongly committed to seeing the implementation of a comprehensive accountability system in the United Nations, and will engage actively in the informal consultations that will follow. We will present our views, with the aim of supporting a comprehensive accountability system in the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Thank you.