



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77,
ON AGENDA ITEM 130: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2012- 2013
- INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, DURING THE FIRST
RESUMED PART OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New York, 8 March 2013)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on Agenda Item 130: Programme Budget for the Biennium 2012-2013: Information and Communications Technology.

2. We extend our thanks to Mr. Hugh O' Farrell, Board of Auditors Chair of the Audit Operations Committee, for introducing the report of the BOA on ICT (A/67/651) under this agenda item. We would also like to thank Mr. Mario Baez, Chief of the Policy and Oversight Coordination Service, Office of the USG for Management for introducing the Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors (A/67/651/Add.1), as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the ACABQ and Mr. István Posta, Chair and Inspector of the Joint Inspection Unit, for introducing their respective reports.

3. The Group takes note of the Report of the Board of Auditors on the Handling of Information and Communication Technology which is contained in document A/67/651, the Report of the Secretary General contained in document A/67/651/Add. 1 as well as the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on ICT Governance, which is contained in document A/67/119.

4. The Group intends to thoroughly examine the information, analysis and recommendations outlined in these documents and looks forward to constructive and fruitful deliberations on the subject during the course of this first resumed session.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The Group of 77 and China has always supported management reform initiatives which have, as their objective, the increase in efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, credibility and accountability within the Organization. In this regard, we underscore the significance of a sound ICT infrastructure in facilitating the creation, storage and dissemination of accurate and timely information which is crucial to the decision-making processes of the Organization in the areas of peace and security, development, human rights, international law and Humanitarian action.

6. The Group recalls resolution 60/283, which articulated the decision to replace the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) with the next generation ERP system and to adopt the International Public Sector Accounts Standards (IPSAS). The Group would also like to recall Resolution 63/283 which approved the resources for the implementation of the ERP and endorsed the new ICT strategy for the UN Secretariat including the Office of Information and Communications Technology.

7. The Group notes with serious concern that more than four years after the granting of approval by the General Assembly, the Organization has failed to successfully implement a workable ICT strategy. Duplication and fragmentation continues to define the UN's data and information processes and have resulted in systematic hemorrhaging of resources and a higher cost of operations.

8. The Group asserts that the Secretariat, in revising its approach, must seek to learn from the mistakes made in the implementation of the current strategy. The Group concurs with the Advisory Committee that the ICT strategy did not achieve its three main goals because it did not provide a clear direction or describe how ICT changes were essential to business needs or to the core objectives of the United Nations. We maintain that any new ICT strategy must be aligned with the United Nations' transformation goals and initiatives, including the enterprise resource planning system-UMOJA, IPSAS, and the global field support strategy. In this regard, the Group notes with concern the absence of proofs of serious collaboration between OICT, UMOJA and DFS in enabling the transformation which the Organization has embarked upon.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The Group continues to stress the need to take into account the autonomous nature of some entities and related ICT requirements. We caution against entering the debate of centralized versus decentralized and lose focus on what is truly important for the work of the Organization. The ICT strategy for the United Nations should be aligned to the business objectives of the Organization, and take into consideration the specific data and information requirements of peacekeeping operations, with a view to providing the requisite level of security, availability and flexibility which is necessary in Head Quarters, Office Away from Headquarters and field missions.

10. On the other hand, the Group encourages the Secretary General to seek further opportunities for synergies and for the adoption of common solutions and standards across the United Nations System, as mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 64/289 on system wide coherence. Ultimately, an appropriate balance must be struck between the ICT activities that are to be centralized and those that should remain delegated.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The Group recognizes the importance of developing a global operational framework for ICT security, business continuity and disaster recovery. The existing fragmented approach, including the use of an estimated 1,994 software applications across the UN Secretariat, exposes the Organization to considerable ICT security risks, as underlined by the Board of Auditors. In this regard, the Group calls for a thorough and targeted implementation of the Secretary-General's Action Plan to address security concerns as well as the adoption, without further delay, of the information security charter and associated policy documents in a manner that assures accountability at all levels of the Organization.

12. The Group notes that the implementation of the first phase of the action plan is expected to be completed in 2013 and that full implementation is expected to continue in 2014. In this connection, we eagerly await an update on the status of implementation of the Action Plan during the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

13. The Group concurs that the function of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) is crucial for ensuring the effective direction, planning and management of data and information activities and, as such, we note with concern that the position of CIO has been vacant since July 2012 and that an appointment has not been made to date. Concerning the advertising of the post, the Group wishes to underscore the importance of examining the implications of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors as it relates to the strategic priorities of a senior Officer.

14. In the same vein, the Group would like to underline that the post of Head of Strategic Management Service has been vacant for 18 months; with the implication that, as specified by the Board of Auditors, only a small proportion of the OICT's staff are dedicated to executing a challenging global strategic agenda, leading change or driving innovation. The Group will seek more clarification on the long period of vacancy of this crucial post for the implementation of the ICT strategy.

15. In the light of the above, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the plan to review the operating model of the Secretariat with a view to effectively delivering the new information strategy, as well as for the delivery of Organization-wide changes in support of the Chief Information Officer. The Groups looks forward in this regard, to the report on global service delivery models which is to be submitted to the General Assembly at its 68th session in 2013.

Mr. Chairman,

16. The Group recognizes efforts made at the operational level to date and notes the positive feedback given by business users regarding the Office of Information and Communications Technology and ICT staff in the execution of their operational functions. It is our hope that the full potential of ICT will be realized through the formulation of a practical information strategy, with its technology components, appropriately aligned with the major business transformation initiatives that are currently underway and is compatible with the organization's complex and decentralized structures.

17. The Group would once again like to reiterate its support to the Secretary-General's efforts to reform and modernize the ICT systems and looks forward to receiving a comprehensive report during the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly which fully addresses the mandates specified in resolutions 60/283 and 63/262, 64/243, 65/260.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.