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Statement by
H.E. Mr. Arun Jaitley

Hon'ble Member of Parliament &
The Leader of Opposition in the Upper House of Parliament
and the Member of the Indian Delegation

At the

5th Committee Plenary Meeting on the
Financial Reports & Reports of the Board of Auditors
68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York

October 11, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election to the Chairmanship of the 5th Committee and to the members of the bureau.

Mr. Chairman,

The Board of Auditors constitutes the core of UN's oversight mechanism. Its observations and recommendations play an important role in UN's financial and administrative management.

My delegation wishes to commend Board for its high-quality reports that continue to guide the work of this Committee and that of the General Assembly in administrative and financial matters.

I would, therefore, like to thank the Chairman and the other members of the Board of Auditors for their reports. I am also appreciative of Mr. Carlos Ruiz, Chairman of the ACABQ.

Mr. Chairman,

Major management reform initiatives are currently under implementation in the United Nations in the fields of information technology, accounting, human resource, field support, and capital master plan. These are resource intensive projects.

We are happy that preliminary phases of UMOJA have been launched and that the IPSAS implementation is on course. We have also noted improvements in UMOJA's project governance.

We now look forward to elucidation of the end-state visions and the road map for the implementation.

In this regard, we would like to underscore the need for better and expeditious follow-up action on Board's recommendations. There is much scope to improve the synergy between various oversight bodies in the UN system in an effective manner.

The success of these initiatives will depend not only on their timely implementation, but also on their sound financial management and delivery of all intended benefits. Needless to say, the case for sound oversight has never been as pertinent as today.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Leader of the Opposition in my Parliament, I can affirm the critical importance of strong audit institutions for ensuring public accountability.

Indeed, the competence of our Audit Office is playing a stellar role in consolidating the democratic fabric of our constitutional order by ensuring accountability and oversight in public finances.

Mr. Chairman,

The agenda for the upcoming session is substantial. We are going to deliberate the programme budget for the biennium 2014-15, second performance report, special political missions, and the mobility framework besides the ongoing management-reform projects. Most importantly, revised appropriations for the 2012-13 biennium will be before the Committee for its decision.

Mr. Chairman,

Most of the recent budgets have been characterized by low-level initial appropriations that are supplemented at the revised appropriation stage.

There is a fundamental disconnect between the creation of mandates and our aspiration to freeze budget-levels well ahead in time.

Mali, Syria, and Great Lakes all testify to the reality that the prediction in budgetary matters is as difficult as the prediction of crisis itself if not more.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
