

**Introductory statement to the Fifth Committee
on “Third progress report on the accountability system in the
United Nations Secretariat (A/68/697)”**

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Under-Secretary-General for Management
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Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General’s “Third progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat” (A/68/697).

The report describes the progress made for the past 8 months since the last annual report on accountability. It includes an action plan for further strengthening each accountability tool discussed in the report, such as results-based management (RBM).

We have also provided an overview of how the business transformation projects - Umoja and IPSAS - are at the foundation for strengthening accountability in the Organization. Every accountability-related initiative we are implementing is part of a comprehensive process aimed at making the United Nations a more accountable and better-managed organization.

We have grouped these initiatives into three categories:

- (1) A stronger focus on performance and results: This category includes RBM, strengthening and extending the senior managers’ compacts, and reforming the performance management and development system. Umoja and IPSAS will substantially improve our monitoring and reporting on performance and results.
- (2) Improving governance and oversight: This category includes strengthening the roles of the Management Committee and Management Performance Board; proactive engagement with the oversight bodies and follow-up on their recommendations; Enterprise Risk Management; improving the Human Resources Management Scorecard; and strengthening ethics and transparency. Umoja and IPSAS will provide real-time and comprehensive data for decision-making purposes.
- (3) Better management and administration: This category includes staff contractual reforms, the talent management system (Inspira), procurement reforms, and reforms in the peacekeeping arena (e.g. Integrated Conduct and Discipline Framework).

Results-based Management

The GA requested, in its resolution 67/253, that the Secretary-General start implementing the results-based management framework in a phased manner throughout the Secretariat.

In line with this decision of the General Assembly, my office led an inter-departmental working group to develop an action plan for implementing RBM. The working group considered each stage of the RBM process (planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting). The recommendations of the working group were discussed and endorsed by the Management Performance Board (MPB) which will also monitor their implementation.

The working group determined that what was most needed in the Secretariat was a demonstration of the commitment of senior managers to RBM and the training and tools with which staff could implement it.

The report elaborates the findings and recommendations of the working group, specific actions to be implemented with a specific timeframe and an office responsible for its implementation.

The report also includes the results of an extensive literature review, related to both the United Nations system and outside organizations, on the lessons learned and the challenges that different organizations have faced in the implementation of results-based management. These findings were taken into consideration in the elaboration of the action plan.

Enterprise Risk Management

I am particularly pleased to report you that we have made a significant progress on United Nations Enterprise Risk Management in the past six months. In fact, my office has just completed a Secretariat-wide risk assessment with input from every head of department and office and many other senior staff.

The preliminary results will be presented to the Management Committee this month, including risk definitions, a full analysis of key risk drivers, a description of the controls already established by management and an evaluation of their effectiveness, and an outline of potential risk response strategies.

After the Management Committee has agreed on a common understanding of the top risks and their criticality, the responsible managers in the different areas of the Organization will define comprehensive risk treatment and response plans with responsible risk owners.

The ERM function in my office will monitor progress and periodically report to the Management Committee on the implementation, updating and maintenance of the risk register as appropriate.

On-going efforts to strengthen and enhance accountability

The report details a number of implemented and/or planned reform initiatives to further strengthen and enhance the existing accountability tools in the Secretariat in areas such as: performance management and development; ethics and accountability; strengthening accountability in the field missions; and procurement.

Mr. Chairman, the Secretary-General is committed to making the United Nations a better managed and more accountable Organization. However, as the Secretary-General stated in his report A/64/640, "strengthening an accountability system in an organization as complex as the United Nations is a daunting task and a continuous process". We look forward to your continuous support and encouragement.

Thank you very much.