



United States Mission to the United Nations

799 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY 10017

www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov

Statement by Stephen Lieberman, Minister Counselor for UN Management and Reform

On Agenda Item 132:

Review of Efficiency: Accountability

Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly

Tuesday, March 11, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The United States would like to thank Under Secretary-General for Management Mr. Yukio Takasu for introducing the Secretary General's Third Progress Report on the Accountability System in the United Nations and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for introducing his Committee's report on the subject.

As my delegation has stated in the past, the principles of accountability, integrity, efficiency and effectiveness throughout the United Nations are key to ensuring the success and long-term viability of the Organization. We strongly support the UN's continued efforts to achieve these principles and believe that it is imperative that the Organization have strong control mechanisms and oversight capabilities in place to monitor the achievement of results and to ensure that mandated activities are carried out responsibly, effectively and efficiently. Every dollar wasted through inefficiency, mismanagement, or corruption is a dollar that is not spent on achieving the essential work of this Organization.

Regarding the specific issues laid out in the Secretary General's report on the UN accountability system, I would like to highlight a few this afternoon.

The United States welcomes the progress made in implementing IPSAS and Umoja to bring about positive transformative change at the United Nations. We recognize this has been a sea-change in how the UN does business. Accordingly, my delegation underscores the need for both of these projects to be completed effectively and efficiently. Like any major transition, this

process has not always been easy, but we firmly believe that these enhancements are essential for the modern and sustainable United Nations that we all want to meet the global challenges of the years ahead. My delegation will continue to monitor developments in both of these key areas.

The United States also notes the implementation of results-based management at the United Nations, and during the informal sessions we will be interested to learn more about how the UN will implement the recommendations of the RBM working group.

Enterprise risk management has been under consideration for some time with many useful recommendations provided by the Independent Audit Advisory Committee and others regarding the need to assess risk and to strategically intertwine, or as the UN would say—mainstream—risk management at every level of the Organization. With this in mind, we urge the Secretary General to expeditiously complete the Secretariat-wide risk assessment and for senior management to continue to make this a high priority.

The United States also notes the ACABQ's concern regarding the credibility of the UN procurement appraisal system and the need for a viable system that links performance with rewards and sanctions. We will be interested to hear more about plans to implement additional key performance indicators to further increase accountability and enhance internal controls.

In regards to personal accountability, the United Nations should be the standard bearer – holding staff accountable for achieving results and taking firm and prompt corrective actions for poor performance or misconduct. Setting a positive example is key to leading positive change. For this reason, my delegation commends the Secretary-General for improving the usefulness of senior manager compacts by measuring performance against targets set in their leadership compacts.

Mr. Chairman, the United States remains greatly concerned about accountability in field operations, especially in regards to sexual exploitation and abuse and criminal misconduct. We once again stress the absolute imperative to fully enforce the United Nations' zero tolerance policy against sexual exploitation or abuse throughout the United Nations and especially in field operations where people who have recently suffered through conflict may be the most

vulnerable. We look forward to finalization of the Department of Field Support policy on accountability for conduct and discipline in field missions. The United States is also keenly interested in how risk management practices will be introduced into "pilot" areas. We look forward to the promulgation this year of revised administrative issuances for describing the types of conduct for which disciplinary measures may be imposed and encourages the United Nations to expedite its efforts in this regard.

Relatedly, we look forward to the Ethics Office's completion of a comprehensive review of the regulatory frameworks for protecting whistleblowers in order to ascertain what more is needed to establish protection and a safe zone for those reporting wrongdoing and misconduct.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we have an opportunity to address many different issues in this agenda item that can improve the Organization's accountability, transparency, and integrity and the my delegation looks forward to working with all other delegations to address these important issues with the objective of enabling an Organization that is second to none for meeting the daunting global challenges of today's world.

Thank you.