



Bangladesh

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**Statement by Ambassador Ismat Jahan,
Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN, NY
at the Thematic Debate on Management Reform**

New York, 08 April 2008

Mr. President,

I join other speakers in thanking you for organizing this important thematic debate. We also thank the Secretary General for his participation in the discussion as well as for his important remarks.

UN Reform, like any other reform, is a process. We do recognize the achievements so far accomplished since 1997 when the UN reform marathon was formally launched. The Outcome Document of 2005 had also recognized 'Secretariat & Management Reform' as a core agenda. Rounds of discussions have taken place since then. However, the very title of our today's thematic debate 'Toward a Common Understanding on Management Reform' speaks for itself. It underscores the need for common understanding, we believe, it presupposes that there is a need to identify the prevailing divergences, both in the perceptions and actions, in the area of UN management reform, in order to bridge the gaps, as we aspire to take remedial measures in the best interest of the Organization.

Mr. President,

My delegation has a deep appreciation for the contribution of the Four Nation Initiative (4NI). I believe the proposals, ideas and perspectives put forward by the 4NI would provide sufficient impetus to our common efforts in improving the governance and management system of the UN.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador John W. Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of Group of 77 and China. I would however make some additional comments on certain issues of our interest.

Mr. President,

Despite some progress in the ongoing management reform exercise, we submit that much remains to be done including in the area of human resources management. This, to our mind, is one of the cornerstones on which the structure of the UN is built upon and which also broadly factors in the core functions being governed by the Member States and managed by the Secretariat. This is also a vital issue not only in terms of accountability and transparency on the part of Secretariat, but also an important ingredient in building trust among the Member States as well as between the Member States and the Secretariat.

We note with concern that the compliance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution is still far from satisfactory, in selection and appointment of staffs in the Secretariat. Also, in contravention of the letter and spirit of many GA resolutions, serious imbalances including gender imbalance have continue to remain with regard to representation particularly at senior levels. These inconsistencies have a negative impact on the overall level of confidence among all relevant actors in the UN system and by extension on all phases of working process i.e. planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This dismal situation must be improved and the appointment and recruitment process should be transparent and legitimate and fully respectful to the desire of larger membership, in compliance with the decisions adopted by the General Assembly.

Given the growing expectations and demands placed on the UN and also taking into account the expanding role and workforce of the UN, we strongly suggest that the current '2700-strong pool of posts' earmarked for geographical distribution must be expanded in taking into account the reality on ground. As for the share of each Member States of these posts, my delegation is also of the view that, apart from the three weighted factors i.e. contribution, membership and population that determine the desirable ranges, a fourth element i.e. level of posts or positions should be incorporated in the current methodology. This may help fix somewhat the imbalances between number and level of posts meant for geographical distribution.

Also, taking into account the contributions of the Troop Contributing Countries, necessary urgent steps should be pursued to implement para 19 of UNGA resolution 61/279 in full in ensuring the proper representation of those countries in the DPKO and DFS.

Apart from eliminating the anomalies in recruiting system, we also believe that the current contractual arrangements should be streamlined and condition of services of the UN field staff be improved not only to attract and retain personnel of highest quality but also to extend fair treatment to them. Adequate budget allocation should also be made to invest in staff trainings to enhance their capacity and efficiency. Having done so, it would be justifiable to put in place rigorous accountability measures.

Mr. President,

As for the resources, we reiterate our position that sustainable reform can not be achieved without allocation of adequate resources aligned to mandates created by the Member States. My delegation would further reaffirm that so called 'zero nominal growth' budget being proposed by the Secretariat for the last couple of biennia is not a UNGA endorsed principle and it also does not reflect the preferences of the larger membership. This selective approach by the Secretariat can be counterproductive in implementing the mandates, particularly those relating to priority areas like development. We also maintain that the core activities of the Organization should be financed from the regular budget in which the participation of the entire membership is ensured at all levels of planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. In this regard we emphasize once again the critical need for full, timely and unconditional payment of assessed contributions by the member states.

We note that the extra-budgetary resources proposed for the biennium 2008-09 stood at \$6.60bn, a net increase by 12% over the previous biennium with an

additional manpower of 428, which was a rise by 4.35% thus increasing the total figure to 10,255 from last biennium's 9,827 staff. We would like to reiterate our position that an effective methodology needs to be devised without further delay enabling the totality of the membership to participate in all the phases of decision, as well as, in the policy-making and implementation, with regard to these additional resources.

Mr. President,

Another perennial problem which needs urgent redress during ongoing reform exercise is the late submission of reports before the Fifth Committee. Needless to say, this late submission adversely affects the process of making well-informed and well-defined decisions by the Member States. The reasons behind this should be addressed permanently and unless a tangible solution is put in place, this would continue to debar the larger membership from putting together their collective wisdom in taking decisions. As, like ours, most of the delegations are small in size, late submission of documents, often complicated by the enormous volume, puts us at a comparative disadvantage, thus restricting fullest contributions from the entire membership of the organization.

Turning to the issue of mandate cycle, in our view, there is scope for further improvement at both the formulation and implementation phases of the mandates. Necessary measures should be put in place so that both the member states and the Secretariat have the common understanding with regard to interpretation of the mandates and priorities set by relevant UN decisions, ensuring transparency and accountability at all stages of their implementation.

Mr. President,

As Article 2.1 of the UN Charter stipulates that "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members", we strongly believe that all reform measures should strive to realize in full this leading ideal – which is closely connected with morality and justice. We can not but assert that this is a collective responsibility of both the Member States and the Secretariat. Improving trust among all actors, putting in place clear line of duty, aided by necessary measures of accountability and transparency could be an important step forward.

I thank you.
