



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. LOURDES PEREIRA S., FIRST SECRETARY, MISSION OF ECUADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 133: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING ON THE UNITED NATIONS - ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM IN THE UN SECRETARIAT, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 9 March 2017)

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on Accountability at the first part of the resumed 71st session of the Fifth Committee.

2. The Group would like to thank Mr. Yukio Takasu Undersecretary-General for Management, for introducing the Secretary-General's report (A/70/668), and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing its related report.

Madam Chair,

3. At the outset, the Group would like to stress the importance of this agenda item and that an accountability system is a matter of priority for Member States.

4. In this regard the Group recalls that the General Assembly resolution 64/259 defined accountability as "the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honoring their commitments, without qualification or exception. Accountability includes achieving objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, in fully implementing and delivering on all mandates to the Secretariat approved by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies...". The Group reiterates the important roles and responsibilities of senior managers and heads of departments within the Secretariat in performing such obligations.

5. The Group wishes to take note of the 6th progress report (A/71/729) of the Secretary General which highlights several measures taken to strengthen accountability including the Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption framework for the secretariat accountability in the field missions and the updated policy on protection against retaliation.

6. The Group further takes note of the Secretary General's report which also states that transformative projects like IPSAS, Umoja, the GFSS, mobility and the capital Master plan have also strengthened accountability and in this regard the group will be interested in learning about the practical measures that the Secretary General intends to introduce to strengthen the elements of accountability in this transformative initiatives as recommended by the ACABQ.

Madame Chair,

7. The Group remains concerned about the low rate of implementation of recommendations of the oversight bodies especially those related to the accountability of management and staff, and emphasizes that such implementation is an essential part of the system of accountability.

8. In particular, the Group is concerned about the lack of reference to the Board of Auditor's findings and recommendations on personnel and institutional accountability in the Secretary General's report as well as the declining implementation of the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight services (OIOS).

9. The Group will therefore be interested in learning more about the challenges faced by the Secretary General in implementing the recommendations of the oversight bodies and urges the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts in this area.

10. The Group agrees with the ACABQ in stressing the indispensable roles of external and internal oversight mechanisms, which are carried out through regular audit reviews and the issuance of pertinent recommendations, which often highlight operational deficiencies and are aimed at strengthening the performance of managers in monitoring the activities for which they are held accountable.

Madam Chair,

11. The Group welcomes the development of a single set of definitions of what constitutes fraud across the UN system as well as the prompt establishment of a central intake mechanism for investigation and the establishment of the new anti-fraud corruption framework. The group looks forward to learning more about these efforts during the informal consultations.

12. The Group further welcomes the finalization of the new whistle blower policy and protection against retaliation and looks forward to the recommendations of the working group regarding enhanced protection of other personnel working with the United Nations.

13. The Group looks forward to learning more about the efforts of the Secretary General in developing a single tracking system to cover all forms of misconduct to ensure consistency as well as monitoring the status of implementation of the GA resolutions on budgetary and administrative matters and the development of a results based management plan.

Madame Chair,

14. The Group continues to be supportive of an effective and efficient accountability system across the Secretariat in order to foster and embed a culture of greater accountability in the working habits of staff and to move towards the improved management of financial and human resources. Given that the process of implementing an effective accountability system is an ongoing exercise, an annual progress report for the consideration of the General Assembly is therefore necessary.

15. The Group will engage actively in the informal consultations. We will present our views with the aim of supporting a comprehensive accountability system in the Secretariat of the United Nations.

I thank you, Madame Chair.