



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AGENDA ITEM 129, REVIEW OF EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS: SECOND PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 8 March 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 129: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, on the important issue of Accountability.
2. The Group would first like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Management, Mr. Yukio Takasu, for introducing the Secretary-General's report, A/67/714 entitled "Second progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat" and the Chairman of the ACABQ, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for introducing the Advisory Committee's report, A/67/776.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China has considered the Secretary-General's report, which was expected to respond to the requests of the General Assembly, as reflected in its resolution A/RES/66/257, and to present comprehensive information on the progress of the Organization towards the implementation of the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat.
4. The Group recalls that in its resolution 66/257, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to develop, as a priority, a clearly defined and well-documented plan that includes clear objectives, responsibilities and a timeline for accomplishing the specific actions he is undertaking to strengthen accountability in response to the present resolution and resolution 64/259 (A/RES/66/257, para. 6). We concur with the ACABQ which notes with concern that no such plan is contained within the Secretary-General's current progress report.
5. Our concern is greater taking into consideration that this is the second progress report on this issue and, neither the first nor the second one have fully responded or implemented the General Assembly resolutions 64/259 and 66/257 which contain the mandate of Member States regarding accountability. Our Group reiterates that this issue requires the attention and commitment of the Secretariat.
6. The Group of 77 wishes to recall that resolution A/RES/64/259, stated the definition of 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 honouring 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◆"

7. The Group of 77 and China would also like to recall that resolution A/RES/66/257 emphasized the importance of establishing and fully implement real, effective and efficient mechanisms that foster institutional and personal accountability at all levels.

8. Against this backdrop, the Group is deeply concerned that there are 59 staff who have been held responsible for misconduct or for falling below the standards expected from international civil servants and that the basic and fundamental professional principles for international civil servants, including the Standards of Conduct for the International civil service have not been fully upheld. The Group concurs with the ACABQ that these standards of conduct are applicable to all staff, including senior managers.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The report of the Secretary-General states that only 1 per cent of Secretariat staff either does not meet or partially meet performance expectations for the 2011-2012 performance cycle. However, the Group of 77 considers that this percentage falls short of what reality shows us. This concern has also been expressed by the ACABQ and the Group agrees that the Secretary-General must address this performance appraisal system which lacks credibility.

10. The report indicate that a Staff-Management Committee Working Group on Performance Management and Development is currently considering ways to improve the role of senior management teams, underperformance and rewards and recognition system to be delivered in 2013 Staff Management Committee annual meeting. The G77 would have preferred to receive that information in the context of the current progress report considering the extensive time the Secretary-General had to prepare it.

11. The report shows very slight progress with regard to two essential pillars of any comprehensive accountability framework, namely performance reporting and results-based management. This serious shortcoming in the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 64/259 deeply concerns the G77 as an example of lack of strong willingness to foster a culture of accountability throughout the Secretariat.

12. In this regard, the Group is all the more concerned that the Secretary General has not fulfilled at all the General Assembly request stated in its resolution A/66/257 about the development, as a priority, of a clearly defined and well documented plan that includes clear objectives, responsibilities and a timeline for accomplishing the specific actions he is undertaking to strengthen accountability.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Concerning the delegation of authority, the Group of 77 notes the need to clearly articulating which UN officials have the delegated authority to take specific decisions and actions and to identify the legal source of authority in each instance.

14 In that regard, our Group is deeply concerned that the Secretary-General has not prioritized efforts to update the current delegation of authority system, taking into consideration the upcoming implementation of Umoja and this, despite the General Assembly's repeated request to address the deficiencies in the current system as a matter of urgency.

15. The Group of 77 and China stresses the importance of the correct application of the resolution A/RES/66/257, in order to promote a greater transparency in the Secretariat, strengthen the dialog with Member States and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative and budgetary functioning of the Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

16. Given that the process of implementing an effective accountability system in the United Nations is a continual and ongoing exercise, the Group of 77 and China confirms its initial position of submitting an annual report on progress made towards the implementation of the accountability framework for the consideration of the General Assembly. The annual submission of these progress reports does not represent an obstacle for the implementation of accountability initiatives in a timely and proper manner. On the contrary, we consider it is a critical way to increase accountability and responsibility in front of Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

17. The Group of 77 and China remains strongly committed to seeing the implementation of a comprehensive accountability system in the United Nations, and will engage actively in the informal consultations that will follow. We will present our views, with the aim of supporting a comprehensive accountability system in the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Thank you.

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