STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. IMTIAZ HUSSSAIN, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 117 � INVESTING IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 22 March 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this agenda item.

2.   We thank Mr. Eduard Blinder, Director, Office of Information Technology Services Division, for introduction of the Secretary-General's report A/61/765 and the Chairman of ACABQ, Mr. Rajat Saha, for introduction of the Committee's report A/61/804.

3.   The Group of 77 and China would like to recall and reaffirm resolution 60/283. In this resolution the General Assembly had requested the Secretary General to provide detailed information on the structure and staffing requirements of the envisaged information and communication technology structure, as well as the lines of the responsibility, the functions of the proposed structure and its relationship with other information and communication technology units in the Secretariat and offices away from Headquarters. The Group concurs with the recommendations of the ACABQ contained in the report A/61/804 that the Secretary-General's report does not respond to the General Assembly's request.

4.   In this regard, it is regrettable that the Secretariat has not implemented paragraphs 3 and 5 of General Assembly resolution 60/283 and thus is preventing the Assembly from concluding its consideration of the ICT strategy of the Organisation. This will lead to unnecessary delays in the implementation of the reform proposals approved in 2006. The Assembly in June 2006 agreed to establish the CITO and replace IMIS with ERPS based on the assurances that it received from the Secretariat that it intends to submit a comprehensive report in March 2007. The Group expects that the Secretariat in a formal session will be able to explain the reasons for delay in responding to resolution 60/283. The Group has consistently stressed that the full implementation of General Assembly resolutions is an important element of improving accountability towards Member States and we trust that the report will be prepared without any further delays and submitted to the Committee at its second resumed 61st session, which is nearly twelve months after the adoption of resolution 60/283.

5.   The Group of 77 and China wishes to express its concern that the report did not respond to the request of the Assembly for proposals on how to increase the use of open source software in the Secretariat. Member States in June 2006 were assured that the Secretariat intends to address this aspect in the comprehensive report. Based on this understanding, the Assembly in resolution 60/283 agreed to revert to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on this matter in the first resumed 61st session. We expect that the Secretariat will respond to the request of the Assembly in provided proposals on this matter in the comprehensive report.

6.   Furthermore, the Group regrets that the report has not responded to paragraphs 13 and 15 of its resolution 61/233.   Before the adoption of the resolution, the Committee received assurance from the Secretariat that it would be able to report on the decisions of the accounting task force regarding the implementation of IPSAS and the development of the ERPS. It is therefore

regrettable that these undertakings were not acted on. Indications are that the new ICT system may be costly and Member States require assurances that the Secretariat is proceeding as expected and coordinating with the other UN entities.

7.   The Group of 77 and China recognizes the need for a sound ICT infrastructure in the United Nations essential to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability. The Group would like to emphasize that in the implementation of the ICT strategy the lessons learnt from the past projects in this field should be fully taken into account. The Group would like to emphasize the urgency of a comprehensive information management strategy, which should take into account the entire set of organizational requirements. We also believe that introduction of an ICT system should fully support the result based management process and be able to cope with all planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting functions in an orderly and integrated manner.

8.   The Group appreciates the progress achieved towards the establishment of effective and efficient ICT operations and application of uniform standards with similar level of technological innovation in all offices of UN since the implementation of ICT strategy that was launched in 2002. We hope that the full potential of the ICT would be reaped by establishing central and strategic management of ICT investment and the focus of the new system would be on the entire organization wide needs rather than on some departments. The Group therefore is concerned to note that the Chief Information Technology Officer has not been appointed. The Assembly in June 2006 was told that this position was crucial to the success of efforts to improve ICT policies and the establishment of the position cannot be delayed until 2007.

9.   The Group would once again like to reiterate its support to the Secretary-General's efforts to reform and modernize the ICT system and looks forward to receiving a comprehensive report that would fully address the mandate specified in resolutions 60/260, 60/283 and 61/233. The Assembly in 2006 has acted in good faith by agreeing in principle to establish a new Chief Information Technology Officer and replacing the IMIS with ERPS before having had an opportunity to consider the details of the proposals, which it was supposed to receive in this session. We trust that the Secretariat in future will make a greater effort to implement General Assembly resolutions.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.