



GENERAL STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR DUMISANI S. KUMALO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON THE REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE ON "INVESTING IN THE UNITED NATIONS: FOR A STRONGER ORGANISATION WORLDWIDE" (New York, 8 May 2006)

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China hopes that with the passage of this resolution we will all move ahead and deal with the reform of the United Nations. There are many issues that await our collective decision and it is time we focus on the future and help strengthen this Organization.

On many occasions, we have gone on record to say that we welcome the proposals submitted to us by the Secretary-General that will help strengthen the ability of the Organization to implement its mandates more effectively and enable it to serve the interests of the entire membership.

The Group of 77 and China has been supportive of a number of major reforms. We supported the approval of the resources needed for the Human Rights Council. It was the Group of 77 and China that fought to have a peacebuilding support office be funded from predictable new resources and not from within existing budget levels or through establishing temporary posts. It is the Group of 77 and China that wants to ensure that we deal with development challenges in more concrete and tangible ways. As it is, we are still awaiting our negotiating partners to join in a consensus that will build on the global partnership that was confirmed by the September Summit.

We were instrumental in the approval of an amount of \$100 million that the Secretary-General urgently needed to proceed with the Capital Master Plan. It was the developing countries that have always insisted that the Secretary-General should receive adequate and predictable resources to undertake effectively the numerous tasks of this Organization. It was also the Group of 77 and China that supported the budget level requested by the Secretary-General in 2005 and opposed the spending cap.

Since the adoption of the Outcome Document last September, the Group of 77 and China has supported the creation of an ethics office, the finalization of the whistle-blower policy and increasing the investigation and auditing capacity of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

Clearly, the suggestion that the Group of 77 and China is somehow blocking or delaying reform is at best misleading or at worst absolutely untrue.

We want to reassure all Member States that the resolution we have just adopted does not in any way delay or prevent the reform of the United Nations. In fact, a careful reading of this resolution will show that many of the proposals in it are meant to make this a better Organization. A large part of this resolution captures areas in which there is general agreement among Member States about their importance and necessity. The exceptions are those proposals that would have amended the oversight role of Member States, through the General Assembly.

In addition to the governance issues, the elements in the resolution that we differed on with our negotiating partners were on the enforcement of gender targets in the Secretariat, ensuring equitable geographical representation in the recruitment of the Secretariat, in particular at senior levels, and increasing procurement opportunities for developing countries. These elements are important to developing countries and to suggest that fighting for them would detract from the reform initiatives of the Secretary-General is misleading.

Everyone in this Assembly knows that this Organization does not reflect the international character of its Membership, in particular at senior levels that seem to be monopolized by nationals from a few countries. This is despite repeated calls on this matter by the General Assembly. The suggestion that nationals from developing countries are somehow less qualified and not able to meet the standards that we have set for our international civil servants in the Charter of the United Nations is untrue.

The Secretariat must stop paying more than just lip service to the calls to ensure a greater gender balance and equitable geographical representation in the recruitment and promotion of its staff. Our resolution is merely asking for proposals on gender targets and geographical distribution to be included in the September 2006 report. To suggest that these requests will delay the proposals of the Secretary-General or halt the reform exercise is false.

The June report on procurement inter alia will elaborate on the Secretary-General's proposal to move towards a lead

