



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY NORMA TAYLOR ROBERTS, PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON CLUSTER IV (THE IMPERATIVE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION: STRENGTHENING THE UNITED NATIONS) OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT: "IN LARGER FREEDOM: TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL" (A/59/2005), AT THE INFORMAL THEMATIC CONSULTATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 27 April 2005)

Mr. Facilitator,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the Secretary-General's proposals for strengthening the United Nations. The Group believes that in carrying out the process of reform of the Organization it is important to ensure a balance in the roles of the respective Bodies and the exercise of their responsibilities. We also necessarily have to examine the structure and organization of the Secretariat to efficiently discharge its responsibilities.

The reforms being proposed would involve changes in working methods of the respective Bodies and structural and procedural reforms which may require new political mandates.

This intervention is confined to reform of the ECOSOC and the Secretary-General's proposals for the reform of the Secretariat.

The Group supports the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and believes that the Council should be suitably empowered to fulfill its mandate as envisaged by the Charter. Such an undertaking is imperative if we are to adequately and comprehensively address issues of economic and social development.

The Group welcomes the opportunity to engage constructively in the process of consultations on the issue of reform in order that the High-Level event later this year can adopt comprehensive measures to give primacy to the critical role of the Council in addressing global, economic and social issues. Consequently, the Group is in the process of studying all the proposals which have been advanced on the strengthening of ECOSOC and will provide a more detailed position in due course.

With respect to the reforms proposed for the Secretariat, the Group recognizes that there will be need to make adjustments in how the Secretariat is organized in order to ensure efficiency and also that such adjustments may necessarily require re-ordering and strengthening of the Secretariat in order to carry out any new mandates of the Organization.

In this context the Group wishes to make the following comments on the five main proposals put forward by the Secretary-General for the reform of the Secretariat.

1. Review of all mandates older than five years

With respect to this proposal, the Group recalls that there is already in place an inter-governmental mechanism for review of mandates in accordance with the provisions of the programme planning rules and regulations. The Group is of the view that if it is a question that the existing procedure is not functioning effectively, then the approach should be to strengthen the mechanism so that it can do so.

The Group also interprets this as a proposal by the Secretary-General for a political mandate by the General Assembly to undertake this review. The Group has serious doubts about this since it is a technical exercise which requires a comprehensive analysis of the respective mandates. We believe that the current process should be allowed to continue and that this exercise should be undertaken in tandem with the budgetary reform process currently being implemented.

2. One-time staff buyout

The Secretary-General has asked Member States to agree to provide him with the authority and resources to pursue this "buyout". In any consideration of this proposal a number of issues relating to the criteria and modus operandi for undertaking this exercise would have to be taken into account. Such issues as the scope of the buyout, number of posts, type of programmes, as well as available resources would need clarification before any decision can be taken. An indication of the implications for staff mobility and permanent contracts would also be relevant in considering this

proposal

3. Comprehensive review of the budget and human resources rules

The Group recalls that a reform of the budget process was undertaken by the General Assembly in 2003 and the General Assembly in its resolution 58/269 decided to review this process with a view to taking a final decision at its 62nd Session. The Group would therefore suggest that any further review of the budget process should await the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General on the experiences gained with the changes made in the planning and budgeting process as requested in the resolution of the General Assembly.

With respect to a review of the human resources rules, the Group also recalls that a number of reform initiatives proposed by the Secretary-General in recent years have been approved by the General Assembly and are currently being implemented. In this regard, the Group also recalls the comprehensive resolution (59/266) on Human Resources Management adopted by the General Assembly in December 2004 and which requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the 61st Session, consolidated reports on the implementation of this resolution.

4. Endorsement of the package of management reforms to improve accountability, transparency and efficiency within the Secretariat

In his report, the Secretary-General recalls the package of structural reforms for the Secretariat launched in 1997 and which were subsequently followed up by other managerial and technical reforms. The present request by the Secretary-General to endorse a package of reforms requires further clarification as to the specific reform proposals in question.

5. Comprehensive review of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

The Group affirms the importance of the oversight function of this office in promoting accountability and integrity in the operations of the Organization and the need to ensure the independence of the Office. The Group questions however, the timeliness of the call for a review taking into consideration the resolution 59/649 adopted by the General Assembly during the main part of the 59th session which contained several measures aimed at strengthening the OIOS and requested the Secretary-General to submit reports to the Assembly on the implementation of the proposed measures aimed at, inter alia, ensuring the independence of the Office. The resolution adopted on the OIOS at the recently concluded resumed session of the General Assembly in March also reiterated the independence of the OIOS and the need to enhance its capacity and hence its authority. The Group is of the view that Member States should await a report on the implementation of the resolutions before any further review is undertaken.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates its support for the reform and institutional strengthening of the United Nations and is prepared to examine all the proposals and to engage constructively in the process of consultations on the proposals for reform outlined by the Secretary-General in his report.

I thank you.