



AUSTRALIA



Australian Mission to the United Nations

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

Fifth Committee

29 November 2011

Agenda item134: Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2012-2013 – ICT, Umoja/ERP

**Statement by Shannon White, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations
on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand**

(As delivered)

Thank you Mr Chairman.

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. I would like to thank the Controller, the Assistant Secretary-General for Field Support, and the ACABQ Chair for introducing the reports related to these important matters.

Mr Chairman,

CANZ delegations are long-time supporters of the modernisation of information and communications technologies within the Organisation. We remain strong supporters of ICT reform, and are committed to the successful and timely implementation of the UMOJA enterprise resource planning project.

For the United Nations to be effective in the modern era it must achieve a global, harmonised, and strategic approach to ICT – one that is strongly supported at all levels of the Organisation. Management accountability and oversight are, of course, integral to this process.

Mr Chairman,

Regarding the UMOJA ERP project and the third UMOJA progress report. It has been nearly six years since the General Assembly agreed to the implementation of this project, with high expectations that it would facilitate the more efficient and effective management of human, financial and physical resources across the Organisation.

Mr Chairman,

The UMOJA project has been plagued by delays. Some were to be expected in a project of this size and complexity. Recruitment of the right experts for the job, for example, is one hurdle that, unfortunately, we have come to expect in relation to the timely implementation of UN reform.

However, other problems, such as the projects current governance issues, were not expected. These problems are particularly disturbing to our delegations, because they could, and should, have been tackled by senior management before they were allowed to adversely impact on the project, especially at this critical time.

CANZ delegations agree with the ACABQ assessment that the current anticipated delay of the project's implementation of two years constitutes a failure of senior management, and we will investigate this further in forthcoming negotiations. We are also deeply disappointed that the delays effecting UMOJA will have flow-on effects on other important projects, such as IPSAS implementation.

Mr Chairman,

CANZ delegations will work constructively with the Committee and the Secretariat to ensure an outcome on this item that addresses our concerns, and helps to get this fundamental piece of management reform back on track.

Mr Chairman,

Another important element of the modernisation of the Organisation is the ongoing reform of UN information and communications technologies and the related ICT strategy. We also have high expectations of what this reform will achieve as a process distinct from, yet linked to, UMOJA.

CANZ delegations welcome the efforts made by the Secretary-General to revise the previous proposal for the implementation of the ICT strategy at reduced cost. We concur with the ACABQ that the revised approach should help address the piecemeal nature of the UN ICT environment, which continues to hamper the effective and efficient running of the Organisation. There is, no doubt, a need for greater coherence and coordination in the management of UN ICT activities.

However, there is also a need for greater specificity regarding the realisation of quantifiable benefits from the ICT strategy. In these difficult economic times, it is not enough to simply assert that there will be benefits for the Organisation in the long-term without a clear demonstration of the outcomes that the strategy and its related projects will achieve. Once again, CANZ delegations will look closely at the ICT proposals before us, with a view to ensuring that the gains we have been promised can be realised within an appropriate budget envelope.

Mr Chairman,

Both UMOJA and the ongoing reform of UN ICT are critical enablers for the work of the Organisation across the board. CANZ delegations remain committed to the creation of an agile and modern UN, including through the effective implementation of projects such as these. We trust that the Secretary-General will continue in his efforts in this regard, and our delegations look forward to working towards successful and measured outcomes on these important items.