



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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Statement by Mr. Jun Yamada
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations
On agenda item 137: Pattern of Conferences

Main Part of the Sixty-Sixth Session
United Nations General Assembly
12 October 2010

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I wish to thank Ms. Woinshet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, Chair of the Committee on Conferences, Mr. Shaaban M. Shaaban, Under Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, and Mr. Collen Kelapile, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for introducing their respective reports on this agenda item. In the following statement, I wish to share my delegation's views on these reports.

My delegation recognizes that maintaining appropriate quality of conference services in the United Nations is essential for proper decision making by the Member States. Yet we believe the services should be provided in the most efficient and effective manner. The Secretariat should not stop seeking efficiencies in delivering conference services through the introduction of new cost-saving measures. At the same time, Member States should refrain from adding unnecessary conference resources when deciding the modalities of new meetings in General Assembly resolutions.

As for the rates of utilization of conference services, my delegation shares the disappointment expressed by the ACABQ in the negative trend in utilization rates at both the four duty stations and headquarters. In order to reverse this trend, Member States should clearly recognize that non-utilization of conference services is a waste of resources. Also, Member States should make further efforts to hold meetings as scheduled and without delays. Therefore, we support the measures proposed by the Committee on Conferences in this regard, such as providing adequate advance notice of cancellations of meetings and reducing the meeting blocks to two hours when possible.

With regard to Integrated Global Management, we note that the ACABQ has expressed concern that insufficient attention is being given to ensuring that travel arrangements are made with a view to achieving cost savings under the proximity rule.

My delegation wishes to hear further explanation on the recommendation of the ACABQ on this matter during the informal consultation.

As for the review of conference management and accountability mechanisms across the four duty stations pursuant to section III, paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 65/245: we concur with the ACABQ that sustainable efficiency gains can be realized through improved reporting lines within the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. In particular, we hope to see improved management of resources provided under section 2 of the regular budget.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to seek further efficiencies in documentation and publication by proposing a sequential workflow of documents and thereby increasing the processing time of documents from the current four weeks to six weeks. We note that the Committee on Conferences could not reach a consensus on this matter. Nevertheless, my delegation believes that the Fifth Committee should consider the proposal with a view to explore efficiencies.

We also note that the Committee on Conferences could not reach a consensus on the Secretary-General's proposal on summary records. My delegation, however, believes the Secretary-General's intention behind the proposal should be commended. We also recognize that the Secretary-General has included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 a description of possible savings to be achieved through the aforementioned proposal. While the Committee on Conferences experienced difficulties in discussing the proposal because it is closely related to the regular budget, the Fifth Committee should discuss this proposal from all aspects related to this matter.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the recommendation of the ACABQ in paragraph 29 of its report to reduce Section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 by eight million dollars. We look forward to discussing this matter in the context of the proposed programme budget.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing my statement, I would like to reiterate that my delegation will participate actively and constructively in the discussions during the informal consultations on all aspects of this agenda item.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.