

Statement of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
Second progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat
8 March 2013

(ACABQ report A/67/776)

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report (A/67/776) on the second progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat. The Secretary-General's report and the Advisory Committee's report thereon is submitted in response to General assembly resolution 66/257.

Mr. Chairman,

The Committee recalls that the subject of accountability has been under consideration by the General Assembly since the 60th session. Seven years after the Assembly's first resolution on this subject, the Committee believes that the Secretary-General has made some important progress in the implementation of a viable framework for accountability. It is of the view, nonetheless, that more work remains to be done. Let me stress several of our key conclusions.

First, the Committee finds that much of the information contained in the SG's report remains conceptual in nature, with too little detail on specific measures and the practical impact of those measures once applied. There continues to be no clearly defined, well-documented plan with clear objectives, responsibilities and a timeline for accomplishing specific actions. In terms of promoting a culture of accountability throughout the Organization, while acknowledging the steps taken by the Secretary-General to date, the Committee stresses the need to increase the quantity, range and frequency of measures in this regard.

Second, the Committee shares the view of the oversight bodies that Umoja, whose implementation is now imminent, must embed key principles of accountability in its design. Specifically, the Committee finds that work to define and update the system of delegated authority needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency so that the Umoja will have a clear articulation of the different levels of decision-making authority across the different operational areas;

Third, while welcoming improvements aimed at making the compacts of the senior managers a more powerful instrument of accountability, the Committee emphasizes the special responsibility of such managers to set the appropriate tone and recommends that the monitoring, oversight and corrective actions taken by the Management Performance Board be included in future progress reports of the Secretary-General. On the efforts to improve the performance appraisal system for all other staff, the Committee awaits proposals for a revised

framework for rewards and recognition as well as a system of sanctions to address underperformance.

Finally, the Committee notes the progress made thus far on the development of a conceptual framework for the implementation of results-based management. However, it is not yet clear to the Committee how the framework will improve accountability and performance in concrete terms and how this will help shift the focus from the delivery of outputs to the delivery of results. The Committee is not therefore in a position, at this stage, to recommend endorsement of the framework to the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General's second progress report identifies a number of important ongoing initiatives where progress has been made, but further development is necessary. Consequently, the Committee believes that there is a continued need to communicate ongoing progress, to demonstrate real impact and to reinforce a culture of increased accountability across the Organization.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.