



Remarks to the Fifth Committee

by H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic

President of the United Nations General Assembly

16 November 2012

INTRODUCTION

- Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, it is with great pleasure that I am addressing you today.
- Let me at the outset congratulate Ambassador Miguel Berger of Germany on his Chairmanship of the Fifth Committee. I would like to commend the way he is guiding the Committee through its deliberations.
- I would also like to congratulate all other members of the Bureau on their election, and to express my appreciation to them for their efforts in steering the work of this Committee.
- I thank the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee for their hard work in facilitating the Committee's deliberations.
- Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, the Fifth Committee bears a heavy responsibility in dealing with the critical issue of financing the Organization and

its activities, including human resources, management reforms and governance and oversight matters. During the 67th session, you have a demanding task of reaching agreement on many very important and complex topics, such as scales of assessment, human resources management, capital Master Plan (CMP), peacekeeping operations budgets, funding and backstopping of special political missions (SPMs), just to name a few.

- Due to its heavy workload and the complexity of the items on its agenda, the Fifth Committee tends to be the last one to complete its work. My intention, in addressing you today at a delicate point in your consultations, is to encourage you to stay the course, and to reach consensus on all agenda items. In that regard, I very much hope that this time around, in spite of all complexities involved, you will conclude your deliberations according to the programme of work.
- I want to make it clear that I do not consider this to be a very flexible deadline. You still have enough time to adjust the intensity of your consultations, despite delays associated with Hurricane Sandy, so you can finish as scheduled.

MAIN ISSUES

Management reform and mobility

- Ladies and gentlemen, our overall goal must remain increasing efficiency without sacrificing quality.
- Various management transformation initiatives currently under way should be seen in this light.
- I welcome the fact that there has been significant progress in the area of human resources management reform in recent years. You have taken important

decisions for the contractual framework, better conditions of service in the field, to name but two concrete measures aimed at recruiting best available personnel. This year - as we all know - one of the main issues is the Secretary General's proposal on mobility policy, which aims to make the UN workforce more dynamic and adaptable for the evolving needs of the Organization. We hope that your decisions will advance the central goal of the HR reform – to continue to improve and modernize the performance of UN staff.

Underfunding issues

- Management reforms demand the allocation of appropriate human and financial resources, as well as the proper use of oversight and accountability tools. I am well aware that in times of global financial austerity and economic uncertainty, the Fifth Committee needs to perform a delicate balance in the choices it makes.
- With this in mind, I would like to inform you that some have brought to my attention that there is an underfunding issue with respect to those parts of the UN system that deal with human rights. I am very much interested in hearing your thoughts on this issue.

Capital Master Plan (CMP)

- Distinguished Delegates, an important aspect of the overall process of strengthening and modernizing the UN is the ongoing renovation of our headquarters. I appreciate everyone's efforts in bringing to near completion work on the Secretariat building, a complex undertaking of relocation of several thousand UN staff members, as well as significant progress in renovating the Conference Building.
- The concern of Member States on the transparency and financial aspect of the CMP is completely understandable. In my view, it remains critically important

that the remaining portion of the project is finished in the scheduled timeframe and within the existing budget.

Scales of assessment

- Ladies and gentlemen, due to the financial strains caused by the global economic crisis, your deliberations on the scale of assessment have become even more delicate. In discussing the methodology to be used to define the scale for the next three years, I respectfully urge you to have in mind that Member States need to be able to meet their financial obligations to the United Nations according to their “capacity to pay”, as you say in this Committee, and to do so in a timely manner, especially with a view to the economic difficulties the majority of them are facing. At the same time, it is important to ensure the Organization is able to function according to its needs.
- I can only encourage you to work in the spirit of compromise, constructiveness and mutual understanding, in order to bring your work to a successful completion.

Financing of the Peacekeeping Operations

- Distinguished delegates, though the main part of your engagement is to be done by mid-December, let me just briefly touch upon the important issue of financing peacekeeping operations, something you will be discussing during your second resumed session, in May 2013.
- As you are very well aware, peacekeeping operations are one of the most important aspects of the United Nations’ capacity to maintain international peace and security. Coming from a region where UN peacekeepers worked very hard to restore and maintain peace, I myself have tremendous respect and gratitude for the risks and sacrifices of the brave men and women working under the UN flag, as well as for Member States contributing to the peacekeeping efforts of the UN.

- It is for this reason that I urge you once again to work in the spirit of compromise when you begin deliberations on the scales for the peacekeeping operations, as well as on modalities for reimbursements to Troop Contributing Countries.

Revitalization of the GA and strengthening the Office of the PGA

- Dear friends, at the end, let me mention one important issue that is closely linked to the overall reform of the United Nations: the revitalization of the General Assembly. In order for the plenary to meet its full potential as the “chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations”, respond effectively to emerging global challenges, and fully implement its various mandates, it is vital, in my view, that the Office of the PGA is adequately budgeted.
- I respectfully urge you to consider raising the current allocation, starting with the 68th Session, in order to reduce the undue burden on the national budget of the Member State whose representative presides over the plenary in future sessions. National financial constraints should not be a factor in determining whether a country chooses to put itself forward for consideration as PGA.

CONCLUSION

- Ladies and gentlemen, not much time is left until the end of the main session. Your heavy workload demands that you work expeditiously in order to conclude all items on your agenda within the established programme of work.
- In coming to an end of my remarks, let me once again commend your commitment to engage in the spirit of constructive cooperation and consensus.

- I fully expect you to end on time!
- I assure you in my strong commitment to the work of this Committee, and wish you every success in your continued deliberations.
- I thank you.