

Friday, 6 March 2015

**Agenda Item 131: Review of efficiency**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Fourth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat:  
Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/676)**

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Under-Secretary-General for Management**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General's "Fourth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat". The report describes the measures taken to strengthen accountability in response to General Assembly resolution 68/264.

It describes the progress made since the previous annual report in the Secretariat-wide risk assessment, the implementation of results-based management, strengthening personal accountability and accountability in the field missions, and the link between Umoja and IPSAS and accountability.

Enterprise risk management

Enterprise risk management is a modern managerial tool that identifies critical corporate risks and clarifies strategic responses to mitigate those risks. After a long preparatory work, the first Secretariat-wide risk assessment was conducted to identify, evaluate and prioritize the top strategic risks for the Organization.

Under the auspices of the Management Committee. The assessment produced a risk register that includes risk definitions, a full analysis of key risk drivers, a description of the controls already established by management, and an outline of potential risk response strategies.

Twenty-three risks were identified, nine of which were categorized as "very high". Thereafter all senior officials met at a joint meeting of Policy Committee and Management Committee in last September and collectively agreed with six "critical" risks which would require the immediate attention of senior management. With the formal approval by the Secretary-General, the following six top strategic risks for the entire Organization were formally established.

The six "critical" risks that were identified are:

- (1) Organizational structure and synchronization
- (2) Organizational transformation
- (3) Strategic planning and budget allocation
- (4) Safety and security
- (5) Extra-budgetary funding and management

(6) Human resources strategy, management and accountability.

We have put together a governance structure that involves the entire Secretariat in this process and that defines specific roles for the different actors, including:

- The Management Committee, serving as the Risk Committee of the Secretariat.
- The Corporate Risk Owners (DSG, CDC, USG/DM, USG/DSS, etc)
- The Risk Treatment Working Groups
- The ERM focal point within my office which will provide technical and methodological support to the tasks of the Working Groups.

On the way forward, the “Corporate Risk Owners” – assisted by the Working Groups – will be responsible for the areas under their responsibility and will report periodically to the Management Committee on the progress made.

It is important to note that the Secretariat is focusing its attention on these six priority risks at this time. However, as the Secretariat faces new challenges and as mitigating strategies are put in place, new risks will emerge, some of the pre-identified risks will move down the priority list and others will move up on a continuous process.

One of the most important benefits of the implementation process will be continuing to facilitate an open dialogue on strategic matters at the core of the activities of the entire Organization, promoting sound governance and enhanced accountability, and progressively embedding a risk aware culture at all levels of the Secretariat.

#### Results-based management

The Secretariat continues to take a phased approach to implementing RBM, as approved by the General Assembly resolution 68/264. In the past year OPPBA provided tailored training for programme managers on the preparation of the 2016-2017 Logical Frameworks. The training resulted in a number of modifications, including more focus on end-user benefits and improved precision and measurability of indicators.

My office delivered nine training sessions on programme monitoring and reporting in New York, Vienna and Geneva and is also implementing a pilot for strengthening self-evaluation capacity within the Department of Management.

This pilot provides targeted training in conducting self-evaluations to existing staff whose functions are closely related to monitoring and evaluation within the Department of Management or who have expressed an interest in learning how to conduct self-evaluations.

Our intention will be to use this pilot as an example to other departments and offices of the Secretariat that have limited resources and do not have a dedicated evaluation capacity.

#### Senior Managers' Compacts

The Secretary-General continues to strengthen the senior managers' compacts to ensure they are a meaningful and powerful instrument of accountability. A recent example of this continual strengthening was the Management Performance Board's first-ever mid-year review in 2014 of the compacts.

I would like to point out one change in the context of the compacts. In response to the GA's request for the Secretary-General "to consider the inclusion in the senior managers' compacts of a new standard managerial indicator related to the issuance of official documentation to the intergovernmental bodies and General Assembly committees.", we have included a slot date indicator in 2015 compact.

#### Strengthening accountability in the field missions

The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support have been implementing an accountability framework and scorecard mechanism since July 2014, which provides a number of indicators to measure the performance of field missions in the execution of the conduct and discipline related functions, as well as new and more detailed reporting on those indicators.

Risk management focal points have been established in missions. Training activities are planned to equip the risk management focal points with the requisite skills to carry out risk assessments in missions. A pilot implementation of ERM is being conducted in MONUSCO, which will be shared and replicated in other missions.

#### Ethics and accountability

The Ethics Office has completed an independent review of the existing policy on protection against retaliation. Recommended changes to this policy are being reviewed by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in consultation with relevant departments and offices. The Office has also completed its internal review of the financial disclosure programme and related policies.

#### Lastly accountability as it relates to Umoja and IPSAS

The report notes some positive trends related to strengthened accountability. For example, Umoja's introduction of common operating models in the field missions has contributed to:

- A comprehensive revision of the respective authorities, roles and responsibilities existing in the field missions and service centres.
- The resolution of cross-functional issues and conflicts, such as those related to delegation of authority between procurement and logistics.

With the introduction of IPSAS and its accrual accounting, more detailed and comprehensive information about the financial position, performance and cash flows are now available to all stakeholders. This has contributed to significantly enhanced transparency, which is a central element underpinning accountability.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.