

Check against delivery

**Statement of the Chairman
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)**

29 February 2016

Strategic heritage plan of the United Nations Office at Geneva

*(ACABQ report: A/70/608; Report of the Board of Auditors: A/70/394;
related Secretary-General's report: A/70/585)*

Mr Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on the report of the Board of Auditors on the Strategic heritage plan (SHP).

The Advisory Committee notes the delays in critical project activities that the Board highlights along with the stringent timeline defined for the project. The Committee concurs with the Board's recommendation to meet project time lines without any dilution of the quality and scope of the project deliverables.

On the project cost estimates, the Advisory Committee shares the Board's view that these should be transparent and open to verification. The Committee concurs with the Board's recommendation to refine and update the preliminary budget estimates for the project and reiterates that its recommendation for the approval of CHF 836.5 million as the maximum overall cost for the SHP project is subject to further review of annual budget performance.

In respect of project governance, the Advisory Committee reiterates the need for greater clarity in the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board. The Committee considers that once approved by the General Assembly, any change in the overall project governance framework or in the roles and responsibilities of its components should be presented for the Assembly's consideration.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee reiterates the need for strict compliance with the United Nations regulations and rules, procurement policies and administrative procedures. It also emphasizes the importance of continuous assurance from the Board of Auditors as to the soundness of the governance framework, internal controls and management practices of the project.

Thank you.

Statement of the Chairman
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

29 March 2016

**Report of the Board of Auditors on the handling of information and
communications technology affairs in the Secretariat**

(ACABQ report A/70/755, related reports A/70/581 and A/70/607)

Mr Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on the report of the Board of Auditors on the handling of ICT affairs in the Secretariat.

The Advisory Committee concurs with the observations and recommendations made by the Board. It commends the Board for the depth of its analysis, the scope of its audit and the continued high quality of its work. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request that the Board of Auditors submit an annual progress report during the five-year implementation period of the ICT strategy.

The Advisory Committee welcomes the progress reported thus far in the implementation of the ICT strategy, including the efforts made to prioritize the development of capacities to support Umoja such as the establishment of the enterprise service desk, the regional technology centres and the enterprise application centres.

However, the Advisory Committee remains deeply concerned that little progress appears to have been made towards the achievement of effective governance, management and operational arrangements for ICT matters in the Secretariat. The Committee considers that continued weaknesses in addressing the managerial and structural issues identified in the Board's previous report present a major risk to the successful implementation of the ICT strategy. Furthermore, given that ICT systems and infrastructure enable other major business transformation initiatives such as the mainstreaming of Umoja and development of shared services, the Committee points out that delays in the implementation of the ICT strategy are also likely to impact negatively on the successful delivery of those other initiatives.

The Advisory Committee therefore stresses the need to implement without further delay the requests made by General Assembly¹ with regard to the central leadership role of the CITO for ICT activities within the Organization and the need for appropriate delegation of authority. It recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to expedite issuance of all the relevant official documents, including Secretary General's Bulletin(s), Administrative Instructions and technical procedures on ICT matters.

¹ In resolution 69/262 section II paras 16, 18, and reiterated in resolution 70/248

Mr Chairman,

I will now highlight the Advisory Committee's comments on some specific aspects of the handling of ICT affairs in the Secretariat.

Concerning the incidents arising from disagreements between stakeholders described in the Board's report, the Advisory Committee notes that such incidents pose risks to the operations of the Organization and can also result in the inefficient and ineffective use of resources. In this regard, the Advisory Committee stresses the need to clarify responsibilities and expects the Secretary-General to enforce accountability.

Concerning ICT investments, the Advisory Committee stresses the need to ensure that all ICT projects are subjected to internal vetting procedures and that all ICT proposals are explicitly identified and properly presented in the relevant budget documents. The Committee also takes the view that all ICT projects or initiatives with total costs starting from a specified threshold level - for instance \$1 million - should be supported by a business case and information on resource requirements with a level of detail that is commensurate with the size of the project.

The Advisory Committee also stresses that the CITO and her office should be fully engaged in the budget preparation process from the outset.

Concerning information security and the ongoing implementation of the Secretary-General's 10-point information security action plan, the Advisory Committee stresses the need to eliminate duplication of ICT activities, systems and personnel dedicated to information security. The Committee concurs with the Board regarding the need to enforce compliance and ensure completion of the information security awareness training by all staff. It recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to apply sanctions for non-compliance such as the temporary withdrawal of access to United Nations ICT systems, as suggested by the Board of Auditors.

Concerning the indicative five-year ICT budget projection requested by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee states its expectation that accurate and comprehensive data on the five-year indicative budget projection for all Secretariat entities will be provided to the General Assembly in the context of the Secretary-General's next report on the ICT strategy.

Concerning the issue of alignment with the ICT strategy, the Advisory Committee stresses that it is incumbent upon the Secretary-General to ensure that all Secretariat entities undertake and complete the required activities to align their ICT activities and plans to those set out in the ICT strategy, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the General Assembly.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.