



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. SIRITHON WAIRATPANIJ, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 132 : REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS : FIFTH PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (NEW YORK, 8 MARCH 2016)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 132: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.
2. The Group would like to thank Mr. Yukio Takasu, Under-Secretary-General for Management, for introducing the Secretary-General's report (A/70/668) and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing its related report.

Mr. Chairman,

3. At the outset, the Group would like to stress the importance of this agenda item and that an accountability system is a matter of priority of Member States. In this regard, the Group recalls that the General Assembly resolution 64/259 defined accountability as "the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honoring their commitments, without qualification or exception. Accountability includes achieving objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, in fully implementing and delivering on all mandates to the Secretariat approved by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies...". As in previous occasions, the Group reiterates the important roles and responsibilities of senior managers and heads of departments within the Secretariat in performing such obligation.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Group takes note of the progress made in the creation of structures and systems within the Secretariat to contribute to the accountability system. It must be stressed that the main objective of such structures and systems is to provide management and corresponding legislative bodies with accurate information to implement accountability measures.
5. The Group is concerned, however, by the low rate of implementation of recommendations of the oversight bodies especially those related to the accountability of management and staff, and emphasizes that such implementation is an essential part of the system of accountability. The Group urges the Secretary-General to redouble its efforts in this area.
6. The Group agrees with the ACABQ in stressing the indispensable roles of external and internal oversight mechanisms, which are carried out through regular audit reviews and the issuance of pertinent recommendations, which often highlight operational deficiencies and are aimed at strengthening the performance of managers in monitoring the activities for which they are held accountable.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Turning to the issue of anti-fraud framework, the Group emphasizes its full support on the zero-tolerance approach to all fraudulent acts. In this connection, the Group concurs with the ACABQ that in order to effectively and efficiently monitor organizational activity, a single agreed definition, proper guidance pertaining to the prevention, identification and handling of fraud and corruption, including a clearly defined policy for the protection of whistle-blowers must be in place.
8. The Group agrees that the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) would be best placed to develop such guidance so as to achieve consistent application across all organizations of the United Nations system. The Group, thus, encourages the Secretary-General to initiate this process and to finalize the revision of the policy against retaliation, which should be separate and distinct from mechanisms for handling staff grievances and interpersonal disputes, and provide protection for whistle-blowers.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Procurement remains as one of the highest risk areas for the Organization. The Group welcomes the training activities undertaken by the Procurement Division which we consider should be mandatory to all relevant staff, and encourages the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen these activities by adequately providing the necessary resources and fostering an awareness culture of their importance.

10. The Group underlines the importance of implementing the recommendations by the Headquarters Committee on Contracts and is pleased to see that the Committee is in a better position to generate statistics and follow up on its recommendations, especially those with policy implication.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The Group agrees with the Advisory Committee that monitoring the status of the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on administrative and budgetary matters and related operative provisions contained therein would be a useful accountability tool for Member States and the Organization alike. Such "secretariat-wide tracking mechanism" would help ensuring that resolutions of the General Assembly are implemented. The Group therefore sees merits in requesting the Secretary-General that the information currently contained within individual subject-specific reports relating to the implementation of the General Assembly provisions be reported periodically and in a consolidated manner, to the Assembly; within the context of the progress reports on the accountability system.

Mr. Chairman,

12. In addition, the Group will seek clarification from the Secretariat on the effective implementation of results-based management, in particular with respect to the mandate to implement the proposal of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts on the improvement of logical frameworks to focus on impact and results, as provided in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report. The Group will react on this matter during the informal consultations in light of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) conclusions and recommendations as contained in paragraphs 81 to 85 of the CPC report of its 55th session and as adopted by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

13. It is concerning to learn that the third evaluation of the self-evaluation pilot programme by the Department of Management was not conducted and that it has no intention to replicate the model nor to recommend it to other departments and offices. The Group stresses that the oversight bodies have repeatedly emphasized the importance of creating a culture of evaluation and self-evaluation in the UN Secretariat. The General Assembly resolutions have also repeatedly stressed that a strong evaluation function is a critical tool for assessing the Organization's performance, through which accountability could be enhanced and lessons could be learned to achieve stronger results and better management performance.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The Group continues to be supportive of an effective and efficient accountability system across the Secretariat in order to foster and embed a culture of greater accountability in the working habits of staff and to move towards the improved management of financial and human resources. Given that the process of implementing an effective accountability system is an ongoing exercise, an annual progress report for the consideration of the General Assembly is therefore necessary.

15. The Group will engage actively in the informal consultations. We will present our views with the aim of supporting a comprehensive accountability system in the Secretariat of the United Nations.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
