



**Sixth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat
(A/71/729)**

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Statement to the Fifth Committee

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Good morning, Madame Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates.

I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General's "Sixth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat".

It can hardly be overemphasised that properly designed and functioning internal controls reduce the likelihood of significant errors or wrongdoing committed or undetected.

The report describes critical components of the accountability system that have been strengthened over the past year, including enterprise risk management; the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework; and a statement on internal control.

The report also explains how Umoja and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) are providing greater visibility into the transactions of the Organization and how such information can strengthen management and accountability.

Enterprise Risk Management

The Organization continues to make steady progress on ERM implementation in the six critical organization-wide risk areas of (1) organizational structure and synchronization, (2) organizational transformation, (3) strategic planning and budget allocation, (4) safety and security, (5) extra-budgetary funding and management, and (6) human resources.

The six related working groups monitor the work of the risk treatment teams, the effectiveness of the agreed actions in mitigating the risks and the evolving risk profile of the Organization, with periodic reporting to the Management Committee.

ERM implementation has also progressed in the peacekeeping missions. Last year DPKO and DFS completed the first phase of implementation, with three missions and the Global Service Centre having initiated risk treatment plans to respond to the risks identified.

To support ERM implementation at the department level, the Secretariat recently developed a practical ERM guide for managers that includes tools and templates outlining how they can implement based on a common methodology. In addition, for staff-at-large, an e-learning course has been made available through Inspira and also through the UN System Staff College.

Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework

The Secretariat's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework was issued last September. It defines fraud and corruption as they apply to the Secretariat, reiterates the Organization's zero-tolerance approach to fraudulent acts, describes the responsibilities of each staff with respect to the prevention of fraud and corruption, and explains the fraud prevention measures. It also includes the principles guiding third parties in contractual arrangements with the Secretariat.

The framework is being widely communicated through a number of channels, including iSeek and publication as well as the Leadership Dialogue dedicated to this topic in late 2016, as well as a related e-learning programme being developed by the Ethics Office in conjunction with OIOS and OHRM, to be available early this year.

In addition, the Secretariat has just begun its first enterprise-wide fraud risk assessment, which will contribute to the assurance process underpinning the statement on internal control.

Beyond the UN Secretariat, the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) has established a task force whose main objective is to agree on a definition for the whole UN System of what constitutes fraud and suspected or presumptive fraud. This task force will also develop a common understanding of partnership arrangements with implementing partners.

Policy against retaliation

The new policy on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct was finalized in January after completing staff-management consultation. The revised policy covers preventive action and misconduct by non-staff personnel.

Statement on internal control

The Secretariat is in the process of implementing the statement on internal control by which programme managers will be requested to verify the effectiveness of the internal control systems under their responsibility at the beginning of every financial period.

As a first step towards instituting this mechanism, OPPBA has established an Assurance and Monitoring Unit in its Accounts Division, whose goal is to provide reasonable assurance over the reliability of data flowing into financial statements and financial records.

Accountability and internal controls in field operations

Directors and chiefs of mission support, as chief fiduciaries of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, continue to be required to submit letters of representation stating that they have properly exercised the authority delegated to them.

An additional mechanism was implemented in peacekeeping that allows for vetting against information recorded in the Misconduct Tracking System and ensures that personnel previously found to have committed misconduct do not serve again in the UN.

The Secretary-General attaches great importance to prevention and response to all forms of misconduct, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse. Missions continue to implement the program of action. After issuance of the current report, a new report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse is issued.

Increased visibility of financial information

Umoja has significantly increased visibility of financial, human resources, real estate and procurement information, which in turn leads to greater transparency and better management and decision-making. For example, Umoja provides real-time information on budget implementation and fund availability across entities and funding sources and serves as a central repository of all extra-budgetary contribution agreements. It has also strengthened compliance with donor agreements and improved tracking of the performance of implementing partners.

Umoja is also a consolidated source of operational information concerning human resources and a global commercial suppliers' database. The Umoja real estate module provides a comprehensive view of the owned, leased and donated right-to-use real estate holdings across all duty stations and field missions.

Improving the performance of personnel

The Secretariat has two performance evaluation systems: (1) the senior managers' compacts for USGs, ASGs, and heads and deputy heads of missions, and (2) the performance management system for all other staff.

The compacts for heads and deputy heads of missions were expanded last year to include an objective on gender mainstreaming, strengthened language on conduct and discipline, and a new commitment in the area of environmental planning.

Proposed changes to the performance management system for staff were included in the recent report of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reform (A/71/323).

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.