

Mr. Chair,

Switzerland thanks the Secretary-General for his two reports. We are glad to note that the changes introduced in last year's resolution allowed a simplification of the reporting without compromising the substance. The reports constitute an indispensable basis for Member States to enhance discussions on how to achieve effective accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission. Crucially, they provide for much needed transparency regarding the efforts both by the United Nations organization and by Member States.

Mr. Chair

Allow me to highlight three points on behalf of Switzerland.

First, I would like to address the concrete allegations against UN officials and experts on mission. The Secretary-General refers these allegations to the States of nationality of the alleged perpetrators and reports on responses received by these States. Let us put the numbers before us into perspective.

Since 2008, the Secretary-General has referred 190 allegations to Member States. 156 of the 190 "referrals" - that is more than three quarters - remain unanswered to this day. These numbers paint a dire picture of the commitment by Member States to provide for effective accountability. We must do better! It is highly important that all Member States examine the referrals and follow-ups by the Secretary-General and respond to them. We also encourage the Secretariat to continue its practice to follow-up with the states concerned several times per year.

Second, I would like to address the legal framework. It is important to understand whether there are gaps in jurisdiction established by Member States. To this end, the General Assembly repeatedly requests Member States to provide information on how they have established jurisdiction over their nationals who serve as United Nations officials and experts on mission. Switzerland regrets that no additional State has submitted such information during the reporting period. We strongly encourage all Member States to provide information on how they have established jurisdiction.

At the same time, we are pleased that further States have commented on the report of the Group of Legal Experts of 2006. We are encouraged to see that they consider favorably the idea of establishing an international legal framework to ensure effective accountability. This echoes the views put forward by a number of Member States in the relevant Working Group during the 73rd General Assembly. The potential value-added of an international legal framework has also been confirmed in the independent comparative legal study commissioned by Switzerland and presented during the 72nd and 73rd General Assemblies.

We strongly encourage more Member States to respond to the recurring request by the General Assembly to comment on the report by the Group of Legal Experts of 2006. This becomes particularly relevant in view of the next Working Group meetings scheduled during the 75th General Assembly.

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Third, allow me to highlight one aspect from the report regarding UN policies and procedures. The Secretary-General underlines the importance of ensuring the coherence of relevant policies of United Nations specialized agencies and related organizations and policies of the United Nations themselves. The Secretary-General recommends that Member States encourage the distinct legislative bodies of these relevant specialized agencies to ensure such coherence. We invite all Member States to carefully examine this recommendation and potentially follow-up in the relevant legislative bodies.

Mr. Chair

Ensuring effective accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission demands a collective effort by the United Nations organization and its Member States. As outlined in our statement, responsibility to provide such accountability lies first and foremost with each Member State. We must assume this responsibility! We must do better!

Thank you.

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