



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

Plenary
8 May 2006



Informal consultations on the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Mandating and Delivering: Analysis and Recommendations to Facilitate the Review of Mandates*

**Statement by HE the Hon Robert Hill
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations**

On behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand

(Check against delivery)

Mr co-Chair,

CANZ welcomes this opportunity to discuss mandates related to the promotion of sustained growth and sustainable development, and to the development of Africa.

As the Summit outcomes document acknowledged, development is one of the three pillars of the UN system, together with peace and security, and human rights. Together, we took significant steps forward on development in the lead-up to the Summit, and in the Summit outcomes document itself. CANZ welcomed this important progress.

Now we must ensure these development commitments make a real difference at the country level. The mandates review provides a valuable opportunity to ensure the work we ask our Secretariat to undertake is geared towards this goal. We all have an interest in ensuring the UN is equipped to deliver results effectively and efficiently, in Africa and elsewhere. In short, we must ensure the UN is equipped to deliver the biggest possible bang for our collective buck. The work the Secretariat does must add value to the complementary roles of other entities working in this field.

In the field of promoting sustained growth and sustainable development, perhaps more than in any other, the maze of UN bureaucracy has grown too large. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), and the UN Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), for example, are complex institutions in their own right. This makes reviewing them complicated, but all the more necessary.

Bodies like DESA and UNCTAD undertake a wide array of functions. But work on those functions is not always clearly distributed among them, opening the door to duplication of work. The mandates review should consider both the relevance of functions undertaken by Secretariat bodies working on sustainable development issues, and the best institutional arrangements for discharging functions which should be retained.

CANZ strongly supports the need for the mandates review to produce early outcomes, across the full range of UN endeavours. But we also recognise action on some mandates related to sustainable development will need time for proper analysis.

Reviewing the mandates we are discussing today will also intersect with other processes stemming from the Summit, including plenary informals to consider a more coherent institutional framework for the UN's environment activities, and the Secretary-General's High-level Panel seeking to improve UN system-wide coherence. We will need to bear these processes in mind. And we must take care not to create duplication as part of efforts to eliminate it. We should set aside from this review issues which fall expressly within the Panel's terms of reference, such as work done by the UN funds and programs.

But none of this detracts from the point that CANZ sees considerable scope for the mandates review to sharpen UN efforts to promote sustained growth and sustainable development, including in the short-term. Duplication of work should be eliminated, both within the UN, and between the UN and other actors, most notably the Bretton-Woods Institutions. And operational activities should be left to those best equipped to undertake them, such as the UN funds and programmes.

As he has done across the full UN agenda, the Secretary-General has provided us with useful guidance on how we might review the mandates we are discussing today. CANZ supports the suggestions in his report entitled *Mandating and Delivering*, and, in many cases, believes we should go beyond them.

We strongly agree that the division of labour between DESA, UNCTAD, the Regional Commissions, and other bodies working on sustainable development must be reviewed. And these bodies should each take a close look at their internal workings to review their priorities and programs in light of Summit outcomes. This should occur across the full spectrum of issues on which they all work: from trade analysis, an area of particular interest to CANZ; to finance; to environment activities.

DESA, for example, undertakes a multitude of tasks, and it is sometimes difficult to understand exactly what outcomes DESA seeks to achieve. DESA should focus on areas where it has a comparative advantage. For example, DESA should continue to provide valuable support to the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the Commission on Population and Development. But, as a start, DESA should consider streamlining its work by leaving operational activities to UN funds and programs.

Similarly, some of the work done by the Regional Commissions overlaps with that done by DESA, the regional development banks, the Bretton Woods Institutions and others. The Commissions should focus their work to better serve regional interests and cooperation. For example, the Commissions need not duplicate work in UNGA and ECOSOC to follow-up on UN conference and summits, and the Commissions' operational work could be better delivered by UN funds and programs. But regionally-focussed institutions established by the Commissions, like the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, can do valuable work.

Another issue raised by the Secretary-General is the UN's Regular Program of Technical Cooperation. CANZ recognises the need for technical assistance to promote sustained growth and sustainable development. But CANZ has serious doubts about the utility and cost of this Program, which the General Assembly decided to fundamentally review two years ago. The General Assembly's concerns have not abated: the Program remains a supply-driven vehicle, and over 80% of its funds go towards senior UN positions. The time has come to complete the General Assembly's review.

The Secretary-General also proposes the consolidation of reports on sustained growth and sustainable development issues. As we have said before, CANZ sees the consolidation of reports, on a large scale, as a key early outcome the mandates review should deliver. We look forward to soon receiving the Secretariat's detailed views on reports which could be consolidated. We expect a significant number of reports in this field will be mentioned.

The UN's work to promote sustained growth and sustainable development benefits millions of people. And the UN is now equipped with more resources than ever to benefit millions more, in Africa and elsewhere. We must ensure the UN is able to use these resources effectively. Through the mandates review, we can significantly streamline the UN's architecture in this field, always having as our goal the better promotion of sustained growth and sustainable development on the ground. CANZ is committed to this goal, and looks forward to working with other States to achieve it.

Thank you, Mr co-Chair.