

**Deputy-Secretary General's Remarks to the Fifth Committee
(5 October, 2007)**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be with you here today at this the opening Session of the Fifth Committee for the 62nd Session of the General Assembly.

At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I wish to warmly congratulate you on your election as Chair of this important Committee. I am confident that under your leadership the Committee will ably handle the tasks before it. I also extend my congratulations to the newly elected members of the Bureau who, I have been told, are a very experienced group of experts.

Mr. Chairman, given the important role of this Committee for the Organization's work, I felt it was my duty to be here today to reaffirm our confidence in you, and the value we attach to your work.

The Secretary-General has made a firm commitment to working together in full partnership and transparent dialogue with you - the Member States - and my presence here, and that of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, is an expression of this commitment. We all understand the Secretary-General's call for an administration focused on results - efficient, directed, pragmatic and accountable, an administration representing excellence, integrity and pride in serving the global good.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In his address to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General reminded us of the need for a Stronger United Nations for a Better World. We need to strengthen the three pillars of the United Nations' work - in the areas of development, peace and security and human rights - if we are to build a more peaceful, more prosperous and a just world.

Ladies and gentlemen:

At the 2005 World Summit, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the United Nations in order to enhance its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively, the full range of challenges of our time.

And in subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly on reform of the United Nations, you have consistently called for strengthened accountability in the Organization, for a more effective and efficient implementation of legislative mandates in the use of human and financial resources. Indeed, the issues of effective and efficient use of resources, legislative mandates, budgets, accountability and oversight will again be central to your deliberations at this Session, as will management reform.

You have also called for improved managerial performance, including improvements of work processes, greater transparency and the highest standards of ethical conduct among staff.

The Secretary-General and I are aware of these decisions and are fully committed to working both internally within the Secretariat, and with you the Member States, on a number of fronts to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN.

This is particularly true in peacekeeping where the Secretary-General has dedicated considerable efforts to strengthen the Organization's capacity to manage and sustain complex operations. We are grateful for your support and are encouraged by your willingness to substantially invest in bolstering the Secretariat's capacity in this critical area.

The Secretary-General is equally putting prominence in conflict prevention. We believe that strengthening the Organization's capacity in this field will help ensure sustainable peace agreements and limit the deployment of costly and complex peacekeeping operations. We look forward to your support in firming up the Organization's conflict prevention capacity.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Charter calls on the Organization to hire staff that meets the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. This is why through the Ethics Office, we are committed to implementing new policies and training initiatives so as to foster a working climate steeped in a culture of ethics and transparency.

In the context of strengthening the accountability framework the Secretary-General attaches utmost importance to the completion of Performance Compacts with his senior managers.

In July and August, I was engaged in a process of dialogue with each of the senior managers on their 2007 and 2008 Performance Compacts. This is the first time that the Secretariat has conducted a consultative exercise of this nature. It reflects our commitment to strengthening accountability, transparency and performance.

I believe that through this exercise we have made real progress not only in terms of raising awareness of the senior managers on the relevance of these key elements, but of the importance of sharing experiences, building team work and identifying gaps.

But the commitment in this regard goes beyond the Performance Compacts with senior managers.

The Secretary-General and I are also fully committed to equally strengthening the internal management bodies such as the Management Performance Board and the Management Committee, which you the Member States have welcomed as a means of reinforcing the accountability framework.

We see these bodies as a means of building across the board managerial commitment to reform which bolsters the organization's capacity to deliver more effectively.

These mechanisms are also important for ensuring adequate institutional follow-up to the recommendations of the oversight bodies, another important priority of Member States and of the Secretary-General. They will also serve to keep the momentum of reform on track, in a coherent and coordinated manner.

This will be particularly critical in the months ahead as we seek to deliver and manage the proposed improvements in the various reform areas, including a new system of internal justice, the proposed introduction of the Enterprise Resource Planning System or the change over to the new International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

Taken together, these reform measures will help facilitate the switch to more modern business processes and practices improving, inter alia, the quality and credibility of financial and management reporting.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

At this session, the Secretary-General will be asking for your support in several areas where he believes urgent action is needed to further improve our work and effectively discharge the mandates which you have given us. Briefly, they will include the following:

- As a first priority, later this month, the Secretary-General will present for your consideration and approval the proposed programme budget for 2008/9, including a number of add-ons which are essential elements of the reform scheme. We trust you will lend us your strong support in considering the budget proposal.
- We will also submit a number of important reports outlining efforts to improve systems of internal controls and accountability. Specifically, these reports will include an update on the various in-house efforts to improve our procurement systems and management of risks. This is particularly important in view of the expansion of the United Nation's activities in the field in peacekeeping missions.
- We also intend to submit to the General Assembly a comprehensive report on procurement reform, which I know will be of interest to you. In this report, we will be accountable for the resources you provided to us in the last session and we will have to update you on the advances performed in setting up our systems of controls.
- Moreover, we are asking Member States to move ahead on reforms relating to the management of our human resources. You will also have before you the detail and resource requirements of the new system of internal justice which you approved last spring.
- This session we will also place before you the requested information on system needs, scope and resource requirements of the global resource-management system which the General Assembly approved in principle last year.

- Progress on all these fronts will be critical to transforming the human resource base of the organization. It will also be important to the enhancement of managerial decision-making tools including better financial controls, more accurate and timely management reporting. On the whole, progress in these areas will provide us with a better functioning Secretariat.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We will not shrink from our responsibilities of seeking continuous improvement, and to deliver more effectively and efficiently in the discharge of mandates you have entrusted us with. But we expect your support in providing adequate resources in implementation of the mandates.

The Secretary-General and I are convinced that working together in partnership with you the Member States we can successfully confront the challenges of our time.

I wish you all a very successful session. The Secretary-General, all the colleagues in the Secretariat and I look forward to working closely with you for a successful realization of our common objectives during this important session.

Thank you.

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