



PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

22 April 2008

Dear Mrs. Alicia Barcena,

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, I have the honour to bring to your attention the serious concerns of Member States regarding the late issuance of documentation to the Fifth Committee. This issue has been addressed in several resolutions of the General Assembly, notably resolutions 59/265, 58/250, 57/283B, 56/242, 55/222, 54/248 and 53/208, but instead of improving, the situation seems only to deteriorate.

2. The Fifth Committee will hold its second resumed session from 5 till 30 May 2008 in which it will have to decide, inter alia, on all the budgets for peacekeeping operations, for a total of about USD7.5 billion. In order to allow Member States sufficient time to study and consider these budgets, it is necessary to have all documents available in due time before the start of the session. As of now, I regret to note that only very few documents are available.

3. In fact, the Bureau of the Committee has been informed that for two most recent peacekeeping budgets which involve a huge amount of resources, namely UNAMID and MINURCAT, the reports of the ACABQ will be ready only one or two days before the end of the session. The timing is unrealistic and it undermines the quality of decision-making process of Member States on the resource requirements and policy aspects of these peacekeeping operations.

4. Besides the Peacekeeping operations budgets, many other important items are on the agenda of the Fifth Committee, waiting for decisions to be taken by the Member States. For instance the Committee has not yet received all the documents on the following items:

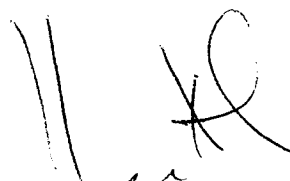
- i. Information and Communication Technology/
Enterprise Resource Planning;
- ii. Development related activities;
- iii. Accountability framework;
- iv. Contingent Owned Equipment rates of reimbursement;
- v. Procurement reform (governance);
- vi. Scheme of pensions for members of International
Court of Justice;
- vii. Judges of International Tribunals; and
- viii. Construction in Nairobi.

5. The Committee continues to face a situation where the issuance of reports is determining the priorities of Member States. Instead, I believe that the programme of work should be determined by the importance accorded to budgetary and time-bound issues by Member States and not by the date on which reports are issued and made available for introduction.

6. Several reasons have been mentioned as why the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) are not capable of providing documents in time. Some point to the increased workload and a lack of capacity, while others see communication as a major problem or even consider documents being presented late on purpose.

7. As Chairman of the Fifth Committee, it is difficult for me and the bureau members to find these reasons satisfactory without identifying possible ways to address the problem. One way to start addressing this problem might be to intensify communications between the Bureau of the Committee, the Chair and Secretary of the ACABQ and the responsible managers in the Secretariat. It should be possible to better synchronize the planning of our work.

8. The late issuance of documentation seriously undermines the decision making process in the Fifth Committee and the smooth functioning of the work of this Organisation. Considering that the Fifth Committee faces an unprecedented workload, it is important to ensure timely issuance of reports for the remaining issues as stated in paragraph 4. Issues other than peacekeeping related items should be addressed as a matter of priority at the main part of its 63rd session.



Hamidon Ali
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

Ms. Alicia Barcena

Under Secretary-General for Management of the UN
United Nations
New York

Mr. Shaaban M. Shaaban

Under Secretary-General for General Assembly and
Conference Management of the UN
United Nations
New York

Ms. Jane Hall Lute

Assistant Secretary-General for Department of the
Field Support of the UN
United Nations
New York

Ms. Susan McLurg

Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)
United Nations
New York

c.c.: **Mr. Movses Abelian**
Secretary of the Fifth Committee