

QDSG

Note to the Secretary-General

Deputy Secretary-General's address to the Geneva Group Directors

On 2nd October 2007 I addressed the Geneva Group Directors at a luncheon here in New York. The address centered on the Secretary-General's Vision of Management Reform and a few other key undertakings of the Secretariat.

Attached herewith is a copy of the address for your information. Out of the discussion there emerged some issues which I thought imperative to bring to your attention:

1. On the budget:

There was an observation that the reforms were coming piecemeal such that it was difficult to have a clear picture of what is to come and its impact on the budget. There was an appreciation of the fact that the United Nations is increasingly being asked to do more than perhaps any other time in history. However there was an emphasis that in case of reforms, some of which may appear cost-neutral there has to be:

- A clear reflection of add-ons that may have budgetary implications;
- The budget has to show seriousness in identifying savings;
- The budget must show how the savings will be sustained;
- The budget must show how the Organization imposes discipline on itself;

Examples of Savings were cited as:

- Out-sourcing
- Pay-offs of employees (staff buy-out)

2. DPA Strengthening:

The need for DPA strengthening was acknowledged and generally supported. Going about DPA reform should bear in mind the perceived imbalance by developing countries between resources for peace and security vis-a-vis the development agenda in the Budget. The strengthening of DPA was one of the issues cited as a piece-meal approach to reform with possible financial implications. However, DPA strengthening would be supported if it is shown that in due course the organization would be saving costs.

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3. System-wide Coherence:

There was an appreciation of efforts so far made in engaging the Member States on the recommendations of the High-Level Panel. Special mention was made of the gender architecture and "delivery as one". The Secretariat was urged to continue to engage Member States more vigorously during the 62nd session of the General Assembly. There was an expression of hope that the Secretary-General would use his influence to advance this issue.



The Deputy Secretary-General
4 October 2007

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Date	07.10.2007	Date	
Comment (if applicable):			

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS AT THE GENEVA GROUP LUNCHEON

New York, 2 October 2007

Excellencies Co-Chairs of the Geneva Group,
Distinguished Ambassadors and Directors,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear Friends,

I am pleased to be with you here today.

I understand that the Geneva Group has had a tradition of meeting with my predecessors at your annual meeting in New York. I therefore welcome this opportunity to meet directly with you for the first time.

You have invited me to share with you a few thoughts on the SG's vision on management reform. I have noted that you have already been briefed this morning on the 2008-2009 Programme Budget by the Controller, and you will be fully apprised on the status of the reform process later this afternoon by the Under-Secretary-General for Management.

As you are aware, the Secretary-General has made a firm commitment to working in full partnership and dialogue with you the Member States, in order to build a stronger UN for a better, more peaceful, more prosperous and just world for our succeeding generations.

This partnership is indispensable to strengthening the three pillars of the United Nations: development, peace and security and human rights.

Everyday we are reminded of the need for a more responsive United Nations.

Be it in dealing with humanitarian crises, armed conflicts, climate change, the HIV/AIDS pandemic or with tuberculosis and malaria. Never has the UN been called upon to do so much for so many, and sometimes with resources which are inadequate for the task.

The issues of management reform and budget are a central part of your deliberations.

This is indeed quite relevant as these issues will form an important part of the work of the Assembly at this session.

Ladies and gentlemen, at the 2005 World Summit, you, the Member States, reaffirmed your 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 and the use of human and financial resources.

You have also called for improved managerial performance, including improvements of work processes, greater transparency and oversight, 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 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.

Along with the Policy Committee, these bodies will 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,

During the 62nd session of the General Assembly, 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 to effectively discharge the mandates which you have given us. Briefly, they will include the following:

- As a first priority, approval of the proposed programme budget for 2008/9 amounting to \$4.195 billion or just 0.5% real growth, and which respects fully the outline endorsed by Member States last year. This is crucial for delivering on Member State mandates and programme priorities.
- The strengthening of the Secretariat's work in the area of peace and security needs to continue. As the Secretary-General has stated, following the reform of DPKO, we intend to propose to the General Assembly a significant strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs. In this we will be counting on your support. By strengthening DPA's work on conflict prevention and good offices, we hope to achieve savings for the Organization in the long run by ensuring sustainable peace agreements that require fewer peacekeeping resources.
- 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 make better our procurement systems and management of risks. This is particularly important in view of the expansion of the UN's activities in the field in peacekeeping missions.
- Moreover, we will submit to the General Assembly a comprehensive report on procurement reform. In this report, we will be requesting Member States additional resources to cope with an increasing level of procurement activities. These activities are intended to support new missions, while keeping the momentum for ongoing measures towards procurement reform and further strengthen internal controls.

- Third, we are asking Member States to move ahead with reforms on how we manage our human resources – by streamlining contractual arrangements, targeting and speeding-up recruitment, training, mobility and harmonizing conditions of service.
- Fourth, we are submitting to the General Assembly, detailed provisions and cost estimates for a new improved system of internal justice. Again, Member States have already approved this in principle, but will need to decide on funding issues so we can get the new system up and running without further delay. This will be critical to the way in which we manage our staff and resolve employment disputes in a speedy, fair and objective manner.
- Finally, we will also be providing a detailed proposal on a fully integrated global resource-management system to modernize and support the four areas just mentioned, which the General Assembly approved in principle, last year. This will include information on system needs, scope and resource requirements. I am convinced this new IT system will help to modernize the Organization and ensure that resources are managed more strategically. It is also a key element in ascertaining that we are on target for the implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards by 2010.

Progress on all these fronts will be critical to transforming the human resource base of the organization, to enhancing managerial decision-making tools including better financial controls, more accurate and timely management reporting, and to a better functioning Secretariat.

We will also continue our work to ensure the more effective and efficient use of our human and financial resources, to strong audit and oversight systems and to boosting our capability to deliver on the wide range of mandates which you have given us.

But we will also continuously need Member States support, to invest in a Stronger United Nations for a Better World.

The Secretary-General and I are convinced that working in partnership with all Member States - and with you the largest contributors who bear the greatest burden of the Organization's budget - we can successfully confront the common challenges with which we are confronted.

Thank you.

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ADSG

Note to the Secretary-General

Travel plan for the Deputy Secretary-General in October

1. I wish to inform you that I am planning to travel to Norway, France, the UK, Italy and the Holy See between 15 and 24 October. Our offices have coordinated our respective travel schedule.
2. In Oslo, I will participate in a seminar on Africa development and will deliver a speech on the MDGs to the Parliament. I will also have a number of bilateral meetings with Norwegian authorities.
3. In Paris, I will attend on your behalf the events organized by DESA on the 20th Anniversary of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. I will also have a number of bilateral meetings with French authorities at the margins of the event.
4. In London, I will attend a conference on MDGs 4 and 5. I will also have a number of bilateral meetings with British authorities. In this regard, I propose to discuss with you the type of support that you are considering to lend to the UK Government in preparation for the 2008 event on the MDGs.
5. In Rome, I will meet with the heads of the Rome-based UN organizations and hold a town hall meeting. I will also have a number of bilateral meetings with Italian authorities. While in Rome, I will meet with the Foreign Minister of the Vatican.
6. In Turin, I will attend the inauguration of the renewed Staff College and participate to UN day celebrations.
7. I would be happy to discuss it further with you. Let me also please know if there are specific messages that you would like me to convey to the officials that I will be meeting.


Asha-Rose Migiro
2 October 2007

cc: Mr. Nambiar

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SG OFFICE
#629 3 Oct.

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