



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
AMBASSADOR MOHAMED YOUSIF IBRAHIM ABDELMANNAN OF THE
PERMANENT MISSION OF SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA
ITEMS 118 AND 132 ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY, IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New York, 23 March 2009)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda items 118 and 132 regarding information and communications technology security, disaster recovery and business continuity for the United Nations: arrangements for the secondary data centre at Headquarters.

2. We thank Mr. Soon-Hong Choi, Chief, Information Technology Office, for introducing the Secretary-General's report under these agenda items and the Chairperson of ACABQ, Ms. Susan McLurg, for the introduction of the Committee's related reports.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China fully recognizes the need for a sound and viable information and communication technology infrastructure in the Secretariat. We believe that ICT investments are crucial to ensure that the United Nations can deliver its global operations, as well as to promote better efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability. The Group also recognizes the importance of enabling the Organization to respond effectively to emergency situations that may impair the operations of critical elements of its information and communication technologies and facilities.

Mr. Chairman,

4. In resolution 63/262, the General Assembly provided the guidelines and the resources for the implementation of a comprehensive reform of the ICT strategy of the United Nations, including on security, disaster recovery and business continuity. The Secretariat had proposed a new secondary data centre to be located in Long Island City. The proposal was subsequently withdrawn, due to the lack of technical capacity of the site, but only after a 10-year lease was signed and resources were wasted. In light of this unfortunate situation, the General Assembly had requested a report on risk mitigation measures to be taken during the relocation of the primary data centre to the North Lawn. The Group recognizes the importance of having risk mitigation measures, since disruptions in the provision of critical ICT services could have an adverse impact on the operations of the Organisation.

5. The Group of G-77 and China is deeply concerned that the report does not respond to the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 62/262. In fact, this current proposal presents some of the same problems as the proposal that was deliberated by the 5th Committee during the main 63rd session. We believe that the Organization has been put in a difficult position where it has to make a strategic decision on a proposal for a substantial investment, which is lacking in analysis, information and overall financial implications. We are also unconvinced that the proposal is the most cost-effective possible or workable, or even that it could be implemented according to the suggested timetable.

6. The report of the Secretary-General also does not respond to the request of the General Assembly to consolidate systems in central data centres, and to prioritize systems in order to minimize the cost of disaster recovery and business continuity. It is disappointing that the Secretariat has yet to prepare a classification of critical and non-critical systems, which would allow a clear prioritization of the systems to be backed up in the secondary data centre. The proposal also present excessive risks in terms of the number of relocations and its overall cost, as it may mobilize staff that otherwise would be employed toward implementing the long-term ICT strategy, in projects such as the ERP.

7. Furthermore, the Group is also concerned that the proposal of the Secretary-General does not envisage the necessary measures to ensure security and confidentiality of the Organisation's data, particularly in view of the fact that an external commercial data centre is supposed to be used.

8. The Group of 77 and China agrees with the ACABQ that the proposal in front of us demonstrate continued deficiencies in the planning and management of the project. It appears to be based on an improvised reaction to situations as they arise, rather than a thorough and sound consideration of strategic, long-term requirements. We are unconvinced that the delays in the project were partially due to the need to re-evaluate the strategy on the secondary data centre in light of resolution 62/262. The delays and the short-sighted nature of the project are, in our view, the result of lack of planning, coordination and proper compliance to established rules and regulations. This was clearly demonstrated by the Long Island City site fiasco, which was funded through a commitment authority that was never examined nor approved by the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The Group of 77 and China will seek clarifications on these and many other relevant issues during the informal consultations. We would like to reiterate the importance we attach to this item and our willingness to engage constructively in order to find a practical solution to this situation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.