



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
AMBASSADOR CONROD HUNTE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM
118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009 -
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, AT THE FIFTH
COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SIXTY-THIRD SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 22 October 2008)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 118: Programme Budget for the Biennium 2008-2009 - Information and Communication Technology.

2. We thank the Chief of Information Technology Officer, Mr. Choi Soon-hong, for introducing the Secretary-General's reports under this agenda item 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 has been always supportive of management reform initiatives aimed at increasing the efficiency and capacity of the Secretariat in delivering better results for the Organization. We fully recognize the need for a sound ICT infrastructure in the United Nations to cope with the challenges as well as to better promote efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the Organization.

4. In its resolution 60/283, the General Assembly decided to replace the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) with a next-generation enterprise resource planning system (ERP) or other comparable system. The Group of 77 and China acknowledges the advantages of the comprehensive ICT strategy and new ERP system, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report.

5. While the Group recognizes the full benefits of the new ERP system, we are also aware that the new system is complex, diverse and required huge resources for implementation. Given the complexity of the new system, we wish to seek clarity and take the following elements into consideration, prior to the implementation of the new system:

- the Organization needs to identify the risks involved in implementing the new ERP system;
- the Secretariat must draw experiences and lessons learned from the other entities of the UN system that implemented an ERP system;
- the Organization should identify a mechanism to monitor and assess the results and performance of all entities involved in the implementation of new ERP system;
- each phase of the implementation of ERP system must have clear objectives and expected results;
- the Organization should outline clear and defined roles and responsibilities for all ICT units in the Secretariat and Offices away from Headquarters;
- the Secretariat must ensure clear lines of accountability and effective leadership in the

implementation of the ICT strategy;

- investments in information technology should result in tangible and measurable efficiency and productivity gains;
- the Organization should identify potential savings through the increased use of open source software, as requested in Paragraph 1 (f) in Section V of resolution 60/260;
- the Secretariat must encourage buy-in among staff at all levels by promoting knowledge of ICT throughout the Organization; and
- the Secretariat must ensure that the new system is fully utilized to streamline existing work processes.

6. Considering the above elements, the Group would like to seek further clarification on the proposed governance structure, including the idea of establishing the Office of Information and Communication Technology at the informal consultation. In this regard, we reaffirm the role of the Committee on Programme and Coordination in reviewing any programmatic change to the strategic framework and the programme budget.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Group of 77 and China recognizes the importance of developing a global operational framework for ICT security, business continuity and disaster recovery. We agree with the view that the fragmented approach used today, in which duty stations develop their own standards and infrastructure, exposes the Organization to considerable risks.

8. However, the proposal of the Secretary-General requires further clarifications. The Group would like to know, for instance, why the proposed Long Island City site is no longer being pursued. We are concerned that the changes in the proposal indicate a lack of strategic planning. The Group also would like to request more information regarding the proposed Site B, including on the process leading to the choice of the specific location. The Group welcomes voluntary contribution of Member States. At the same time the Group believes that the Secretariat must ensure a transparent process in all its operations and activities.

9. The Group of 77 and China notes that the overall resource requirement for the implementation of the ERP system over a five-year period is estimated at over \$280 million dollars. The total funding for all ICT related projects could reach \$372 million dollars. These figures can be even higher once the costs for software customization and integration services are identified.

10. The Group of 77 and China is very concerned with the complex funding scheme proposed for the implementation of ICT reform. By using creative arrangements, the proposal of the Secretary-General tries to avoid the simple reality that additional resources are needed for this project.

11. Many of the substantive areas of the Organization are chronically underfunded; and this often results in lack of implementation of mandates. The proposal to finance the ICT reforms by using available balances in the surplus account of the United Nations General Fund and of the peacekeeping missions is the equivalent of transferring resources from priority areas of the Organization to this project. It also runs the risk that, in the future, managers will be directed to spend less than their budget allocations in order to finance the ERP.

12. Reforms will become reality if they are commensurate with sufficient resources. It is important

that Member States fulfill their commitments in this regard. Expressions of support without the underlying funding run the risk of being an empty promise.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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