



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR DUMISANI A. KUMALO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE MEETING OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP OF THE PLENARY ON SECRETARIAT AND MANAGEMENT REFORM: REVIEW OF MANDATES OLDER THAN FIVE YEARS (New York, 15 February 2006)**

Mr. Co-Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the question of Secretariat and Management Reform. We thank Assistant-Secretary-General Robert Orr for providing us with a report on the progress made by the Secretariat in compiling the information required by Member States to undertake the review called for in paragraph 163 (b) of the World Summit Outcome Document.

We also appreciate the opportunity to respond to some of the questions that were raised by the Secretariat and other Member States at the meeting of the Informal Working Group of 25 January 2006. We trust that our comments will facilitate your efforts to resolve within the coming weeks some of the differences of opinion regarding the negotiations process and our expectations as to the content of the reports, which have become apparent during the last three meetings. We also trust that you will be able to respond to our concerns with regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the staff and financial policies, rules and regulations, which have not been addressed to our satisfaction. We believe that it will be useful to resolve the procedural difference well in advance in order to avoid some of the unnecessary delays that we experienced in December last year when we consider the "Cluster I" issues.

Turning to the mandate review exercise, we wish to make a number of observations in addition to the points that we have raised at the meeting of 25 January 2006.

Firstly, the World Summit Outcome Document has clearly defined the objective, scope and timelines for the mandate review exercise. We expect the Secretariat and Member States alike to respect the letter and spirit of paragraph 163 (b) of the Outcome Document. The Group consequently expects that the Secretariat will submit information on mandates that are older than five years for the consideration of the General Assembly and other Organs during 2006, as stated in the World Summit Outcome Document. Mandates older than five years that have been amended or reaffirmed in the past five years fall outside the scope of the exercise. In the same vein, mandates that have been established in the past five years, even if they are building on mandates that are older than five years, clearly do not fall within the scope of the exercise. Otherwise, the Informal Working Group of the Plenary will be amending the Outcome decisions by modifying either the scope of the exercise or the timelines for our consideration of the information to be submitted by the Secretary-General.

Secondly, the objective of the exercise is to "strengthen and update the work of the Organisation so that it responds to the contemporary requirements of Member States." The work of the Organisation is geared towards implementing the legislative decisions and mandates adopted by the inter-governmental bodies of the United Nations. We are at times able to adopt decisions by consensus but we also have to sometimes resort to the provisions of the rules of procedure. This, however, does not mean that a mandate adopted by voting is less relevant to the work of the Organisation or responsive to our "contemporary requirements" than one adopted by consensus. We, therefore, believe that it is imperative to stress that the final result of the exercise should be to ensure that the Organisation is able to implement the entire range of its mandates more effectively and efficiently. The G77 and China does not accept that the exercise is intended to change the inter-governmental nature of our decision-making, oversight and monitoring processes. Neither is it to reduce the budget levels of the Organisation or to fund more activities from within the existing pool of resources, nor is it meant to redefine the roles and responsibilities assigned to the various Organs of the United Nations by the Charter.

Thirdly, we realise that Member States have never before embarked on an exercise of this magnitude. It is therefore understandable that we are grappling with questions on how to facilitate the process of consideration. In our view, it would be useful to keep the process as simple as possible by keeping within the guidelines set by the World Summit Outcome Document. Our expectations should be realistic and our intentions clear. We, therefore, wish to state clearly that we should avoid arbitrarily assigning criteria according to which we would undertake this exercise. Some Member States have indicated that they regard the exercise as an opportunity to eliminate or reduce mandates that they perceive as being "duplicative" in nature. Others have indicated that the criteria set in Regulation 5.6 and rule 105.6 of the PPBME could be expanded to apply to mandates and not only to outputs, as is presently defined by the

PPBME. We do not support this proposition and wish to caution against trying to apply a "one-size-fits-all" criterion to a very complicated and politically sensitive exercise. What may be perceived as too much "duplication" by some may be seen as too little "co-ordination" by others.

Fourthly, we should also be mindful of the fact that the various inter-governmental bodies and Organs of the United Nations have been reviewing the implementation of mandates in their usual course of work. The Secretariat and Member States have continuously revised the Medium-Term Plan and Biennial Programme Plan of the Organisation to ensure that they reflect the most recent programmes and mandates. The Secretariat has also every two years been reviewing its work and identified obsolete and redundant outputs, which were terminated with the concurrence of Member States and not funded from the programme budgets of the Organisation. We may therefore find that the continuous reviews have simplified the mandate review exercise and ensure that the work plan of the Organisation is more responsive to the "contemporary needs" of Member States than some would have envisaged.

We have taken note of the comments by Assistant-Secretary-General Orr regarding making budget information throughout the negotiations process available to us. We again wish to stress that the focus of our negotiations will not be on the costs associated with activities and we do not see the usefulness of receiving this information before or during the negotiations.

Fifthly, we have previously stated that it would be useful if the template could include information on the inter-governmental bodies that have established and overseen the implementation of a given mandate, as well as the status of implementation and reasons for non- or less than full implementation of the mandates in question. The G77 and China has already indicated that it would not be useful to receive an indication of the amount of resources allocated to any given mandate, in particular as the format of the budget makes it impossible to accurately calculate such costs. In the absence of an acceptable and tested methodology whereby the Secretariat could accurately calculate the costs, including the "man hours" expended on activities, we would urge other Member States to reconsider their position on this question. We have been assured that the objective of the exercise is not cost-cutting in nature and believe that recent pronouncements on how to best reflect the result of the exercise in the programme budget for 2006-2007 detracts from this stated objective. The programme budget for 2006-2007 has been adopted and we should refrain from creating the impression that the elements of the budget will be re-negotiated in 2006. There are established mechanisms through which we logically would address any adjustments, including upwards, in the budget level that may result from this exercise.

Lastly, the Group at the last meeting has proposed that the Secretariat submits the information in an electronic database, which will enable Member States to analyze and access the information from capitals. We appreciate the response by the Secretariat and the efforts to work on such a database. Member States will require sufficient time to work through the information, interact with the programme managers overseeing the mandates and prepare our responses. We, therefore, trust that the Co-Chairs will propose a programme of work that will respond to these requirements and facilitate the negotiations. The timeline for the exercise has been clearly set by the World Summit Outcome Document and we do not believe that the intentions to set an artificial deadline of 30 June 2006 are helpful or even realistic. We also do not believe that the link, which some Member States have drawn and continue to draw between the reform exercise and the spending cap, is useful to our efforts to implement the Summit decisions and strengthen the Organisation.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The Group of 77 and China supports a meaningful reform that is reflective of the views of the collective Membership. We want to strengthen the Organisation and ensure that it is able to effectively and efficiently implement all the mandates that we have bestowed upon it. A stronger United Nations that responds more effectively to our collective needs is in our common interest.

I thank you.