



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY AMBASSADOR DUMISANI S. KUMALO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT (PROCUREMENT) (New York, 22 February 2006)

Mr. President,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on the assumption of the Presidency for the month of February.

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. From the outset I would like to point out that for the Group of 77 and China, the Security Council is not the forum to be discussing matters that fall within the purview of the General Assembly. The Charter of the United Nations clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Principal Organs of the United Nations, as have relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, which is the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative Organ of the United Nations.

Like the Non-Aligned Movement, we wish to reiterate our concern over the encroachment by the Security Council on the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. We see the Security Council infringing on issues that traditionally fall outside its competence and assuming for itself norm-setting powers that are within the purview of the General Assembly. Discussing matters such as procurement is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter, which clearly states the primary responsibility of the Council.

Mr. President,

This meeting comes at a time when the rest of the Membership of the United Nations is actively engaged in a process led by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to reform and strengthen the United Nations. The fundamental principle that underpins this collective effort is that the United Nations is an inter-governmental body where the voice of each and every Member State must be heard and respected, irrespective of the contributions made to the budget of the Organization.

All Member States of the United Nations are required to contribute resources to the Organization based on their capacity to pay. The fact that there may be a difference in the level of monetary contribution to the Organization does not imply any difference in the decision-making role of Member States in the United Nations.

The Group of 77 and China has always supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations. We have always called for greater transparency and accountability within the Organization, as well as more effective utilization of its resources.

Mr. President,

Procurement policies and practices fall under the purview of the General Assembly and are discussed on a regular basis. The General Assembly has always considered reports of the oversight bodies on procurement and the audited financial statements of peacekeeping operations. In fact, in the past few years, decisive action by the General Assembly has led to substantial reforms of the procurement system. The report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) that is discussed today was requested by Members of the Group of 77 and China and we expect it to be formally introduced and considered by the General Assembly.

Therefore the insinuation that somehow developing countries may be tolerant of corruption, mismanagement and fraud is wrong.

The Group of 77 and China expects the Secretary-General to take immediate action in cases of corruption, fraud or any wrongdoing within the Organization. We believe that staff should be held accountable for any wrongdoing, irrespective of their nationality or seniority. We wish to ensure that any disciplinary action meets due process, in accordance with the basic principles of justice and fairness, and is in line with the rules and regulations of the Organization.

This is the reason we believe that today's debate undermines the General Assembly, particularly the oversight function that belongs to all Member States.

Mr. President,

We are aware that when the Security Council has assumed for itself the oversight function over a programme, such as the Oil-for-Food Programme, that was created, managed and overseen by the Council, the experience has not been satisfactory. It was the General Assembly that instituted additional safeguards such as the newly-created ethics office, the whistle-blower programme and the strengthening of the Office of Internal Oversight Services following the erroneous perception of wide-spread corruption and mismanagement within the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Throughout the process of the reform of the United Nations, the Group of 77 and China, representing over two-thirds of the Membership of the United Nations, has always been ready to engage in constructive dialogue with Member States from all regions of the world. For us, the United Nations matters. We represent developing countries that look forward to the United Nations to assist in development and helping our people respond to the permanent threat of underdevelopment. We believe in the need for security, however, security without development will always be unattainable.

I thank you.