



STATEMENT BY MR. AJAI MALHOTRA, ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON MANDATE REVIEW AT THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF THE PLENARY ON APRIL 07, 2005

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement by South Africa as the Chair of G-77.

The review of mandates is one of the more important areas that we need to address in the context of management reform. In fact, the re-evaluation of old UN mandates to determine whether they still serve a useful purpose or justify modification or removal, is an on-going exercise in many ways. This review process provides us with a good opportunity to address some of the waste and redundancy that permeates the UN system. This exercise would eventually have to extend to reviewing mandates of other UN actors, and not merely be restricted to the principal organs. We are ready to join other Member States in an exercise that aims at eliminating obsolete UN mandates, changing those that have become wasteful or ineffective, and reassigning resources so released to other objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me also express my appreciation to the UN Secretariat for responding promptly and effectively to our request to develop an electronic inventory of mandates. When we had sought such a database, we had in mind that it would be of particular use to smaller delegations with limited manpower as also to capitals. We now recognize that the on-line database will not only meet those objectives but has several long-term uses.

We have examined the Secretary-General's report on mandate review that was released on March 30 and would like to commend the

Secretary-General for the dispassionate and professional manner in which the data has been presented. We find it particularly attractive that the facts provided have not been overlaid with subjective judgement. This unbiased presentation provides us with the raw material to conduct the review. We do hope that these facts and the electronic data will now not be twisted with a view to achieving narrow political objectives. Instead, we expect that we could now start in good faith an inter-governmental process of review whose aim will not be cost cutting nor the achievement of targets against artificial timeframes, but a consideration of the mandates to see what we can all agree upon that needs to be retained or dispensed with. This is a Member State exercise and it is for Member States to arrive at their own determination regarding the value or otherwise of individual mandates.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/60/733) helps demystify the mandate review exercise. The definition of a mandate as "a request or direction, for action" is in concordance with the definition of outputs under Rule 105.4 of the PPBME Regulations and Rules. This has been recognized in para 36 of the report, which arrives at the same conclusion that my delegation and the G-77 arrived at in September 2005, namely, that existing regulations and rules provide for an ongoing mandate review. Regulation 5.6 states, and I quote, "within the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General shall submit to the GA, with justification, a list of outputs....which...can be discontinued and which...have not been included in the proposed programme budget." As recently as December 2005, while approving the current biennial programme budget, the General Assembly discontinued over 2,700 such mandates. Nearly a thousand were discontinued in the previous biennium. Figure 2 on page 12 of the report of the SG would have been even more useful if it had also indicated such outputs or activities that have been discontinued in past years and not just those mandates that have not been renewed in the last five years.

This is not to suggest that there are no further activities that could be considered for discontinuance, but to point out that there are mechanisms that permit such ongoing review and which have been and continue to be used.

The Committee on Programme and Coordination reviews such proposals for discontinuance of activities proposed by the Secretary-General. The CPC report is presented to both the ECOSOC and the UNGA for review. It is only in the Security Council that there is no

regular review of its mandates; it would be timely to institute such mechanisms there.

Mr. Chairman,

While existing procedures do provide a means to address the issue of mandate review, it is in the area of duplication and overlapping mandates of principal organs that the inventory of mandates will be useful in order to sharpen the focus of each.

Under the present effort, each principal organ is required to examine its own mandates. However, it is necessary for one body to also examine overlap of activities amongst all principal organs. The only body that can perform such a function is the General Assembly. This also appears to be borne out by the content of the report of the Secretary-General.

The mandate review has to be mutually reinforcing with other processes underway. The Secretary-General has concluded that the exercise of the revitalization of the GA will provide a strong base on which Member States can conduct the mandate review. We would like to take that view a step further and state that decisions and action by the General Assembly on the mandate review relating to all organs will, in turn, also revitalize the GA.

We agree with the Secretary-General that it may be necessary to initiate a process to consider more fully which intergovernmental organ should be the primary forum for the consideration of certain items and to find ways to improve coordination between the principal organs on those issues that are of concern to all organs. Again, this is an exercise for the General Assembly to undertake as the only universal representative organ of the UN.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the recommendations of the Secretary-General, the report has suggested that the Secretariat provide information about proposed mandates in a draft resolution in the same way that it provides budget implications during consideration of a draft resolution. This needs to be considered carefully. Statements of budget implications have of late had the undesirable effect of mandates not being approved in principal organs and main committees unless the resolution states that they are "within existing resources". Firstly, it is the Fifth Committee of the

General Assembly that determines whether a mandate should or should not be financed from within existing resources. Secondly, the gap between resources available and mandates approved has grown over the last few years as a consequence of other bodies adopting mandates "within existing resources". To add another statement on proposed mandates may lead to friction between Member States and also unnecessarily put the Secretariat in conflict with Member States, since determination of the value of a new mandate is a purely subjective interpretation which should be left to Member States. In any event, unlike in the past, Member States would now have the electronic inventory of all mandates to consult in order to determine whether a proposed new mandate is required or not.

Then again, the Secretary-General has stated that a report is often sought as a compromise when there is no agreement on the course of action to be pursued. This is unfortunate but true and is used in situations where decisions have to be taken by consensus. Perhaps this is a small price to pay for maintaining that consensus.

The Secretary-General has also clearly identified the problem of the gap between mandates and resources committed by Member States. There is wide agreement in this room that mandate review is not a cost-cutting exercise. Hence, it logically follows that in the context of this review we should commit to fully fund those mandates on whose continuance we agree upon. If the objective of this exercise is to strengthen and update the work of the Organization, an objective we all share and have agreed to in the Outcome Document, then we would also have to commit to fund the mandates of this Organisation.

My delegation has consistently called for strengthening of monitoring and evaluation functions relating to mandates. We are glad that the Secretary-General has recognized the importance of these functions. Member States should commit to provide resources for monitoring and evaluation up to 2% to 3 % of the regular budget which has been identified by the Secretary-General as the standard for such organizations, as against the 0.35% that exists at present.

Finally, this exercise has provided Member States a valuable tool in the shape of a birds-eye view of all UN mandates. Fifty years ago, Dag Hammarskjöld initiated the first and only previous UN mandate review, but web-based applications with all their possibilities did not exist in those days. Now Member States will have control over the mandates that they have approved, be able to hold the Secretariat accountable

for their execution, and exercise governance more effectively by conducting more thorough monitoring and evaluation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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