

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



INFORMATION AND PRESS DEPARTMENT

32/34 Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 119200, Moscow G-200; tel.: (095) 244 4119, fax: 244 4112
e-mail: dip@mid.ru, web-address: www.mid.ru

Unofficial translation from Russian

PRESS RELEASE

Mikhail Kamynin, the Spokesman of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Answers a Media Question Regarding the UN Secretary General's "Investing in the United Nations" Report

353-09-03-2006

Question: How does the Russian Foreign Ministry assess the recent report of the UN Secretary General, "Investing in the United Nations"?

Answer: At this point we are closely studying the report of the UN Secretary General, which contains a whole package of proposals on UN management reform. This document was prepared by Kofi Annan in line with the instruction from the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in New York last September.

The report contains quite a few innovative suggestions and ideas which, undoubtedly, will require the most thorough analysis and discussion within the UN General Assembly. In particular, it recommends seriously reviewing the existing mechanism of intergovernmental control of the utilization of the financial and human resources of the Organization. In our view, this problem requires an extremely cautious approach because the current distribution of competencies between the statutory bodies of the United Nations took shape through the decades and any ill-thought-out or hasty intervention into this already quite well-oiled and balanced system may entail a disturbance in balance and the loss of management effectiveness in the Organization.

It has to be noted that in principle we do not object to the granting to the UN Secretary General of reasonable flexibility in UN financial and personnel resources management for more effective achievement of the goals and objectives facing the Organization. But such freedom of action should, in our conviction, be accompanied by an enhanced accountability of the UN executive structures to their employers, which the member states are, and by the creation of a full-fledged and effective system of UN managers' responsibility for results of their work. In this context we welcome the so called package approach of the Secretary General, aimed at a coordinated and simultaneous solution of the relevant problems in the management field.

The proposal to strengthen the role of the First Deputy Secretary General by way of the transfer to the latter of UN personnel management authority, in our estimation, needs to be viewed through the prism of the Charter of the United Nations, whose Article 97 states that personally the Secretary General alone can perform the duties of the chief administrative officer of the Organization. By the way, the authority to appoint the staff of the UN Secretariat is also laid upon him by Article 101 of the Charter.

Many other recommendations concerning, in particular, improvement of the package of remuneration of UN personnel in the field, the adoption of new information technologies, and a cluster-based unification of departments of the UN Secretariat need a detailed expert scrutiny with due regard for their administrative and financial implications. These, and then also all the other elements of the report are very complex and narrowly specialized and so we see no grounds for changing the current rules of procedure of the General Assembly, under which any draft decisions affecting budgetary or personnel matters should initially be agreed upon in the Fifth Committee of the UNGA, which is its main working body in this field.

March 9, 2006