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Agenda item 7

Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-second session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Imelda Smolcic (Uruguay)

Addendum

Programme questions: programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2010-2011

(Item 3 (a))

Report of the Secretary-General on programme performance for the biennium 2010-2011

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 5 June 2012, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/67/77).
2. The Under-Secretary-General for Management introduced the programme performance report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of it.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the report and noted with satisfaction its usefulness in demonstrating how the Organization implements its programme of work. Delegations commended the report for being well structured and for containing detailed descriptions about programmes and their achievements. Special mention was made of section II of the report since it provides a good overview of the accomplishments of the Secretariat.
4. Views were expressed that the presentation of the programme performance of different departments should be made uniform and that value judgements in reporting performance should be avoided. For example, delegations noted that the



Secretary-General had indicated, in paragraph 10 of the report, that the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management had performed extremely well, whereas the performance of other departments had not been qualified. In that regard, the Committee stressed the need for a balanced and objective approach to reviewing the performance of all Secretariat structures and entities in the programme performance report. Views were also expressed that the Secretariat should be requested to adhere to the language of the resolutions when referring to issues mentioned by Member States.

5. While recognizing the importance of the use of new technologies, including in relation to the digitization of documents, delegations expressed concerns about the negative impact on the intergovernmental decision-making process of the reduction of printed documents available to Member States and stated that the Committee must keep the matter under review.

6. A delegation emphasized that the term “Arab Spring” has not been approved by any intergovernmental body and constitutes a concept that represents a political position. The delegation regretted that the Secretariat had used the term in several documents and requested that it be deleted in all documents under consideration by the Committee.

7. Some delegations noted that the culture of accountability still needed to be strengthened throughout the Secretariat, including in the follow-up to the recommendations of oversight bodies.

8. The same delegations also noted that the impact of specific elements on the implementation of mandates was mentioned in several sections of the report, in particular in the delivery of common services.

9. In the area of human resources management, some delegations noted that the new selection tool, “Inspira”, had an adverse impact on recruitment, slowing the process of filling vacant posts owing to the time necessary for managers to become familiar with it.

10. The same delegations noted with concern the delay in the implementation of the Umoja project and emphasized that the purpose of the project, which is to provide a better and fully integrated management system, is crucial to improving the management of the Organization’s resources.

11. The tables providing output implementation status were noted with appreciation, and the report was recognized as a key accountability instrument of the Secretariat, in respect of programme performance.

12. While reviewing the reasons provided in the report for the low implementation rate of outputs achieved by some departments, including by the newly created entity, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), delegates raised the issue of different departments of the Secretariat having different dates of origin. Views were expressed that the date of origin of departments should be taken into account when reviewing their performance and that the report should indicate if a department has been established more recently.

13. Reference was made to rule 106.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), and specific questions were raised about the addition of outputs made at the initiative of the

Secretariat. Concerns were raised with regard to outputs added at the discretion of the Secretariat when a provision to reformulate outputs existed in the above-mentioned rule.

14. A delegation noted that 1,712 outputs had been added to the programme and implemented as a result of initiatives of the Secretariat and questioned the reasons for the additions, in the light of the rules and regulations governing programme planning. It was also noted that some additional outputs were related to assistance provided to the Group of 20, and concern was expressed about the fact that various documents submitted to the Committee indicate differing treatment of various groupings of Member States by the Secretariat. In that regard, delegations emphasized the need for equal treatment of all Member States.

15. Views were expressed that financial information was lacking, and the appropriateness of using Professional staff work-months as a proxy measure for resource utilization was questioned. Delegations expressed the need to find a better indicator than staff work-months for reporting resource utilization.

16. Concern was also expressed that some outputs had to be terminated owing to vacancies in the Secretariat. In that regard, a delegation noted with deep concern the termination of outputs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs because of vacant regular budget posts and reiterated that posts could not be kept vacant to generate savings.

Conclusions and recommendations

17. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that more in-depth enterprise risk management be undertaken prior to the introduction of new management tools in order to avoid further delays in the filling of vacant posts and to improve equitable geographical representation and gender balance in the Secretariat.

18. The Committee stressed the importance of the full implementation of the capital master plan in compliance with all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly in that regard.

19. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in future programme performance reports comprehensive information on the impact of the reduction of printed documents on the intergovernmental decision-making process in United Nations conferences and meetings.

20. The Committee noted the use by the Secretariat of terms that had not been approved by Member States, and in that regard recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to replace the term “Arab Spring” with the term “the political situation in some Arab countries” in paragraphs 48 and 721 and in the text box below paragraph 693 of the report.

21. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to fully explain in future programme performance reports the termination or postponement of outputs and activities owing to vacancies of posts funded under the regular budget.