

Progress Report on UN Reform

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New York, 21 March 2006 -- Find below an overview of progress on UN reform in the following areas:

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1. Human Rights Council

Update: At the 2005 UN World Summit, member states agreed to create a Human Rights Council to replace the Commission on Human Rights. In a historic vote, following months of intense plenary and bilateral consultations, the General Assembly adopted the [draft resolution A/60/L.48](#) on 15 March 2006 creating a new Human Rights Council with 170 yes votes, 4 no votes (Israel, US, Palau, Marshall Islands) and 3 abstentions (Belarus, Iran, Venezuela). The Council is expected to convene its first session on June 19th following the elections of members, which are to take place on May 9th.

The Commission on Human Rights is currently in the process of deciding the dates and duration for its 62nd session. Currently, the session has been postponed until Monday March 27th. It is possible that the Commission will only convene for a few days, as opposed to the expected two weeks or the usual 6 weeks. ECOSOC will convene tomorrow afternoon to discuss the conclusion of the Commission's work.

[Click here to download the Draft Resolution on the Human Rights Council.](#)

Overview:

The 53 member Commission on Human Rights will now be replaced by a 47 member Human Rights Council, which will be a subsidiary body of the General Assembly rather than of the Economic and Social Council. Members will be elected by absolute majority, requiring 96 votes, according to a new regional allocation based on equitable geographic distribution. After serving two consecutive terms, members will no longer be immediately re-eligible to serve another term, thus prohibiting de facto permanent membership. In addition to taking into account candidates' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and voluntary pledges/commitments, the GA will also have the ability, through a two-thirds majority vote, to suspend the membership of a Council member that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights. In contrast to the Commission's single six-week session, the Council will meet for a minimum of three sessions throughout the year for no less than 10 weeks with the ability to hold additional sessions. As an important step forward, the Council will undertake a new universal periodic review to assess all states' fulfillment of human rights obligations/commitments and elected members of the Council will be subject to this review during their term. Furthermore, the Council will maintain key strengths of the Commission such as its system of special procedures and mechanisms for NGO participation.

2. Peacebuilding Commission

Update: Member states continue to work on making selections for the Organizational Committee within the four remaining groups: ECOSOC(7), top financial contributors(5), top troop contributors (5), and the GA (7). In addition to the five permanent members, who are ensured seats, the Security Council has selected Denmark and Tanzania to serve on the Committee, with a total of 31 Committee members. For selection modalities, ECOSOC is likely to assign a seat to each region while leaving two additional rotating seats. For the top troop and financial contributors, the groups are likely to use a rotational model in which the top five contributors in each group will serve for the first four years followed by a rotation the following term.

The GA's Fifth Committee is currently considering the Secretary-General's request for additional funding for the Peacebuilding Support Office from within existing UN resources. The Secretary-General has determined that while 8 out of the 15 requested posts (reduced from 21) can be filled through redeployment and secondment of UN staff, to avoid adversely affecting existing programmes, further resources, which could be made available under the provision for special political missions, would be needed for the seven additional posts. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has suggested that \$1,571,300 of the \$2,805,400 requested be provided. In his report, the Secretary-General also outlined the structure of the Peacebuilding Support Office, highlighting support functions in the areas of financing for peacebuilding, planning, and policy/analysis. Various countries have made pledges to the multi-year standing Peacebuilding Fund, which will serve to ensure immediate release of funds to launch peacebuilding activities, address gaps, and support ongoing recovery efforts. The Terms of Reference for the Fund are currently being developed.

Overview: On 20 December 2005, upon the recommendations of the Secretary-General and his high level panel, the Security Council and the General Assembly ended a long phase of intergovernmental negotiations by adopting joint resolutions establishing a new UN Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission will be responsible for addressing a critical institutional gap within the UN and global systems by providing a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and facilitating dialogue amongst key actors. The Commission will be composed of an intergovernmental Organizational Committee to address country-specific situations, a Peacebuilding Support Office within the Secretariat, and a multi-year standing Peacebuilding Fund to support initiatives on post-conflict stabilization and capacity building.

[Click here to download the GA resolution on the Peacebuilding Commission and other related documents.](#)

3. Secretariat/Management Reform

Update: Member states are currently focused on initiating the mandate review of all UN mandates older than 5 years and await a report from the Secretariat. To complement the current reviews on oversight and internal justice, the Secretary-General has released a report entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide," on 7 March 2006 in which he presents 23 recommendations in six areas (people, leadership, information and communications technology, delivering services, budget and finance, and governance) on how to radically overhaul the rules, structure, systems and culture of the UN Secretariat.

Within these categories the SG has focused on a number of goals, which include: better aligning staff skills with current needs; enhancing the Secretariat's ability to manage complex operations; delegating management tasks to the Deputy Secretary-General while building middle and senior management capacity; implementing a more integrated system to store, search and retrieve information; exploring new ways of delivering services such as relocation and outsourcing; shortening cycle for reviewing and adopting the budget with consolidation of budget appropriations; consolidating/streamlining peacekeeping accounts and trust funds; putting in place a stronger monitoring and evaluation framework that better links the budget and planning process more directly with results and managerial performance; and enhancing transparency and accountability of the budget and decision-making processes by improving and putting in

place better mechanisms for reporting and interaction. To implement these reforms the SG has proposed establishing a temporary change management office.

[Click here to download the SG's Report "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide."](#)

[Click here to download the ACABQ Report on the PBSO.](#)

As President of the Security Council for the month of February, U.S. Ambassador John Bolton held open meetings of the Security Council to discuss a recent audit report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on alleged mismanagement of peacekeeping procurements as well as the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. Among the issues highlighted were the need for a stronger OIOS; the need for a stronger system of vigorous ongoing monitoring; the need to distinguish between problems of the rate of deployment, mismanagement and fraud; and the need to update the financial rules, regulations and procedures. On the last point, Mark Malloch Brown noted that often weak compliance with financial procedures did not necessarily denote fraud or mismanagement, but rather flawed procedures.

Security Council discussions on these two issues have raised concerns and objections from the Group of 77, which has interpreted the meetings as an encroachment upon the jurisdiction of the General Assembly. While some countries recognize the Security Council's role in these issues due to its peacekeeping functions, others fear intrusion upon the GA's authority in management and budgeting. These tensions were further aggravated by a letter from US legislators to the G-77 chair accusing the group of blocking legitimate reform efforts.

[Click here to read Mark Malloch Brown's address to the Security Council on the OIOS report, which is included in the Security Council Meeting Record for the Open Debate on Peacekeeping Operations.](#)

Overview: Progress has been made on management and secretariat reform in the following areas:

- Approval of resources for the establishment of an Ethics Office
- Agreement to establish an independent audit advisory committee
- Preparations for an official whistleblower policy and a comprehensive policy on the prevention of fraud and corruption
- Terms of reference prepared for an independent external evaluation of the UN's oversight system
- Establishment of a working group to develop proposals on budgetary, financial and human resources policy
- Establishment of a Management Performance Board

4. Development/ECOSOC reform

Update: Member states continue to negotiate on the two draft resolutions on development and ECOSOC reform.

Overview: The draft resolutions set out various measures to build upon and improve current development efforts on implementation, coordination and integration such as follow-up on the major conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. The draft resolution on ECOSOC reform attempts to establish a more coherent framework of high level dialogues to enhance ECOSOC's coordinating role in global economic affairs. This framework would consist of High-Level Segment with Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and UNCTAD and would include the following:

- A biennial policy dialogue with thematic discussions
- A biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum to review trends in international development cooperation
- Annual Ministerial-level substantive reviews to assess progress on follow-up of the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits on development issues

[Click here to download the draft resolutions on ECOSOC reform and development.](#)

5. Security Council Reform

Update: On Monday 20 March 2006, Switzerland along with Singapore, Liechtenstein, Jordan and Costa Rica tabled their draft resolution calling for reform of the Security Council's working methods to enhance transparency and accountability and to improve collaboration between the Council and the larger UN membership. The draft resolution outlines 19 recommendations, including measures for greater transparency over sanctions and peacekeeping operations and mechanisms to limit the use of the veto in cases of large scale human rights abuse. The group decided to move forward on their resolution after noting lack of progress on Security Council enlargement.

Japan, which is pushing for 6 new Security Council members, may decide not to table their resolution by September given the current lack of support, particularly among permanent members. They may push instead for permanent members to make a minimum level of contributions to the UN regular budget.

Overview: An overview of the proposals is listed below:

- **G4/3 (Germany, Brazil, India):** 10 new members - 6 new permanent without veto/4 new non-permanent (re-tabled during 60th session)
- **African Union :** 11 new members - 6 new permanent with veto/5 new non-permanent (re-tabled during 60th session)
- **Uniting for Consensus Group:** 10 new non-permanent members eligible for re-election
- **Japan:** 6 new members/permanent seats for countries that receive 2/3 majority vote/non-permanent seats for those that receive simple majority
- A proposal introduced by Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Jordan, Costa Rica and Singapore has also been submitted on reforming the Security Council's working methods.

6. System-Wide Coherence

Update/Overview: Based on paragraph 169 in the World Summit Outcome Document on enhancing system-wide coherence, the Secretary-General has established a 15 member high-level panel to make recommendations on improving UN coherency and effectiveness in development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. The proposals that result from this study are meant to complement the UN reform process by restructuring and strengthening the UN's operational activities worldwide. The panel is expected to conclude its work by the summer and present its recommendations during the 61st session of the General Assembly for possible implementation in 2007.

[Click here to download the Secretary-General's letter to member states including the members of this panel and the Terms of Reference for the study.](#)

7. GA Revitalization

Update: the GA President has appointed Ambassador Solveiga Silkalna of Latvia and Ambassador Abdullah M. Alsaidi of Yemen as co-chairs of the working group on General Assembly Revitalization. The co-chairs held their first meeting on February 16th to discuss the role, authority, effectiveness and

efficiency of the General Assembly. Items for discussion also included the GA's working methods, agenda and the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

8. HIV/AIDS

Update/Overview: In resolution A/RES/60/224 the GA took the decision to convene a High-Level Meeting for a Comprehensive Review of progress in realizing the targets set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. This meeting will take place from May 31 to June 2, 2006. According to the resolution, the President of the General Assembly was expected to compile a list of civil society representatives to be invited to participate in the meeting by 15 February 2006. He therefore invited member states to facilitate the nomination of civil society representatives for inclusion on the list. He also reminded member states that the resolution invites countries to include civil society representatives in their national delegations. Civil society organizations that are ECOSOC accredited can also apply to participate by 30 March 2006 with the NGO section of the UN Secretariat at desangosection@un.org (fax: 212-963-9248).

[Click here to download the application form.](#)

[Click here to access the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Resolution for the Follow-up Meeting on Implementation of the Declaration.](#)

9. UN Democracy Fund

On 6 March 2006, the Secretary-General led the inaugural meeting of the UN Democracy Fund, which consists of a 17-member advisory board. The fund, which was established last July and endorsed in the World Summit Outcome Document, has been established to set up projects in different countries to strengthen democratic institutions, enhance democratic governments and institute the rule of law, independent courts, a free press, political parties, trade unions, etc. Thus far the fund has received pledges from 17 countries amounting to \$41 million. The projects are to be assessed by the Fund's staff.

10. Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

On 9 March 2006, the UN launched its \$500 million Central Emergency Response Fund to provide more rapid, effective and predictable/balanced disaster response. Thus far the Fund has attracted \$256 million in pledges from governments and it will eventually accept donations from corporations and individuals.

Government pledges (in US dollars)

UK – 70 million

Canada – 17.24 million

US – 10 million

Netherlands – 24 million

Kazakhstan – 25,000

Thailand – 10,000

Click here for more information:

<http://ochaonline2.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline2.un.org/cerf>

