



# AUSTRALIA



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**United Nations General Assembly: Fifth Committee**  
16 June 2006

## **Items 122, 124, 128, 129 and 136: Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organisation worldwide: detailed report**

**Statement by H.E. the Hon. Robert Hill  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations**

**On behalf of Canada, New Zealand and Australia**

**(Check against delivery)**

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Mr Chairman

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and Australia. We thank Mr. Warren Sach, the UN Controller and Mr. Saha for introducing the reports of the Secretary-General and the ACABQ. We thank also Mr Kenneth Herman, Chief Senior Advisor, Chief Executives Board Secretariat and Inspector Juan Luis Larrabure, Joint Inspection Unit for their presentations.

Colleagues, we have been on the road to management reform for some time now. Consequent to resolution 60/260, we now have before us the detailed reports which elaborate on some of the proposals contained in the report "Investing in the United Nations" that the Secretary General submitted in March. We note that further reports on procurement, accountability and oversight will be submitted this session and look forward to receiving them in a timely manner.

The detailed reports (A/60/846, Addenda 1 – 4) before us address numerous issues. We will today make comment on the key themes, while reserving some of the specific proposals for the informal consultations. Let me say from the outset that CANZ places a high premium on results, and in our view, reforming the management of the UN would enable it to better achieve results for the Organisation and its beneficiaries. CANZ thinks tangible results on management reform during the remainder of the session are essential.

Mr. Chairman

The report of the ACABQ provides some guidance for the Committee's deliberations. On some issues such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and international accounting standards (IPSAS), the ACABQ provides a helpful guidepost, while on others, we would have welcomed more explicit recommendations. The General Assembly will of course use its own judgement in all these areas. But beyond advice on specific proposals, the ACABQ makes a particularly important contribution

through its comments on accountability in paras 6-9 of its report. We are reminded that accountability embraces multiple elements, that its deepening is a work in progress, that the present proposals of the SG will support that deepening, while yet more work remains to be done. Among the key objectives of management reform is to ensure that resources are devoted to activities that matter, that their use is efficient and effective, and that member states can connect these resources with the outcomes we seek.

Mr Chairman

Our delegations view the modernization of information technology and the adoption of IPSAS as basic building blocks of productive organisational change and management reform. We strongly support the direction in which the Secretary-General proposes to go in these areas. It is imperative to have an appropriately qualified Chief Information Technology Officer to provide unified leadership for the Organisation that cuts across departmental lines. This senior official will need to drive a process of major organizational change. It is a function that should be established and filled as soon as possible. As detailed analysis of the requirements for a new ERP system goes forward, it is imperative that the needs of peacekeeping operations and the functionality of the system in the field be fully integrated. We agree with the ACABQ that business process review will form an integral part of the project.

CANZ is strongly committed to increasing the managerial discretion of the Secretary-General. We note the Secretary-General's proposals in Addendum 2 are more limited than proposed last March, in accordance with resolution A/60/260. A major change is that appropriations would remain at the level of budget Section rather than budget Part. The Secretary-General would thus be accountable for changes made, an accountability that would be discharged through performance reporting. Our support for enhanced discretion is well known and we urge all colleagues to address the real issue at hand: what is the best place for certain operational decisions to be taken? Frankly, we were puzzled by the ACABQ advice on these proposals as it is at odds with positions the ACABQ has taken in the recent past on this subject.

We support greater managerial discretion for the Secretary-General and recognise the need for apposite accountability. We understand the Secretary-General will soon provide us with more information regarding accountability. CANZ welcomes this additional information. Let me underline, however, that while CANZ believes these two issues are complementary, they are also very complex. Accountability should, however, not be used as a slogan that impedes doing what makes managerial sense.

Concerning the proposals on financial management practices set out in Addendum 3, we have already voiced our support for international accounting standards. The proposed consolidation of peacekeeping accounts may appear complicated because of the many aspects the report identifies. But the central issue is clear: should we meet peacekeeping financial obligations from a single cash pool? We believe there are good arguments for doing so, as part of a comprehensive package of reform. We look forward to discussing this further in the informals.

And finally, on improved reporting mechanisms. CANZ supports reporting which presents relevant information to Member States and the public in a clearer, more accessible manner than is currently the case. It is within the Secretary-General's purview to pursue an annual report and we encourage him to do so. We welcome the initiative to enhance public access to UN documentation and are interested in the proposed modalities.

CANZ has long recognised the need for a thoughtful and timely review of the Organisation's management. We now have the means to take some purposeful steps to progress management reform and we look forward to working with member states in the coming weeks to achieve results, particularly on ICT, IPSAS and greater managerial discretion for the SG.