



# NORWAY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**United Nations General Assembly**  
**Sixtieth session**  
**Agenda items 46, 118, 120, 122, 124, 128, 129 and 136**  
**Intergrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up**  
**to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related**  
**fields**  
**United Nations reform: measures and proposals**  
**Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit**  
**Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial**  
**functioning of the United Nations**  
**Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007**  
**Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses**  
**of the United Nations**  
**Human resources management**  
**Administrative and budgetary aspects of th financing of the**  
**United Nations peacekeeping operations**

**Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger**  
**Organization worldwide**

**Report of the Secretary-General**

STATEMENT

BY

**Ms. Mari Skåre**  
**Counsellor**

**NEW YORK, 3 April 2006**

Thank you Mr Chairman,

On behalf of Norway, I would like to congratulate Mark Malloch Brown on his appointment as Deputy Secretary-General, and thank him for his presentation of the report *Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide*. I would also like to thank the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) Rajat Saha for his presentation of the committee's report on this matter.

Mr Chairman,

The Secretary-General is urging Member States to invest in the United Nations. Norway is investing in the UN. Ever since the inauguration of the organisation, our strong support to the UN has been a cornerstone of Norwegian foreign policy. We have been a reliable contributor both in monetary terms and in terms of participating actively in policy deliberations and norm-setting processes. My Government supports a stronger UN that makes and coordinates collective responses to global challenges and acts as the principal arena for international lawmaking and policy formulation.

While we understand the rationale behind many of the proposals contained in the report before us, we disagree with some and need to consider more closely the operative consequences of others. I will not comment in detail on all the proposals, but I would like to sketch the broader lines of Norway's position.

Mr Chairman,

A substantial amount of Norwegian public money is transferred to the UN. We have a responsibility to our taxpayers as well as to the people in need of UN assistance, and this means that we must monitor the organisation and ensure effective and efficient management of its resources. Today we see serious weaknesses in the UN administration.

Steps have been taken to rectify this situation, but more needs to be done. If the UN is to have full credibility, it must have a transparent, effective and accountable system for resource management. This does not mean that we have to set up intricate structures and mechanisms, but there must be clarity as to who is responsible for what, and leaders at all levels must shoulder fully the responsibilities involved in leading the organisation. The impression that there are managers in the Secretariat who are not always acting in accordance with the principles of the Charter is very damaging to the organisation.

Norway has been promoting a stronger executive leadership of the UN for a long time and has advocated that the Member States should give the Secretary-General greater authority to manage the resources the organisation receives. However, greater authority for the Secretary-General and his staff, as proposed in the report, has to be coupled with managerial accountability, including accountability vis-à-vis the Member States. The General Assembly has addressed the issue of accountability many times, and we are surprised that it has not been adequately responded to.

With regard to the role of the Deputy Secretary-General, we recognise the need for greater delegation of authority on the part of the Secretary-General to facilitate better management of the organisation, but the overall responsibility must rest with the Secretary-General. We would caution against the establishment of what could be perceived as two power bases in the

Secretariat and we would also caution against decisions being taken in the General Assembly that could undermine the Secretary-General's authority and prerogative to organise his offices.

Mr Chairman,

The Secretary-General has not limited his proposals to in-house reforms of the Secretariat; he also addresses flaws in the governance system. The Member States certainly carry a lot of the responsibility for the difficulties in ensuring efficient and effective management of the organisation, and Norway appreciates this opportunity to express its views on the Member States' responsibilities and the problems in the governance system.

The Secretary-General pinpoints the challenges relating to the governance issue in his report when he says, "Many states have cause to feel excluded from any real say in the affairs of the Organization .... This puts them at loggerheads with other states who feel, on the contrary, that their financial contribution entitles them to a decisive say on these same issues.... This conflict has broken down the division of labour between myself, as Chief Administrative Officer, and Member States."

It is understandable that many countries are concerned, and that they wish to counter what could be seen as attempts to transfer functions from the General Assembly to a small circle of rich and powerful nations. We share this concern. It is the multilateral and universal character of the United Nations that makes it what it is: the leading organisation providing solutions to global problems. Take away the multilateral and universal character of the UN, and it is no longer qualified to be the leading organisation for world order.

We would therefore strongly caution against the proposals in the report on establishing new governance structures within the UN, consisting of small groups of "representative" Member States. We do not believe that this would be in the interest of the United Nations or in our national interests.

While we agree that there are some serious challenges to be dealt with in our decision-making processes, we do not agree that the large number of Member States in the organisation and their participation in negotiations, in itself, constitutes a problem.

We regard the challenges in governing the organisation as being of a more political nature. States often seem unwilling to compromise on their own interests in negotiations and often fall in the trap of micro-management of the Secretariat rather than giving strategic guidance. There is a tendency for Member States to take an à-la-carte approach to the UN and a gap between what Member States mandate the organisation to do and the collective resources made available to do the job.

Mr Chairman,

Concerns that Member States have been excluded from decision-making processes in the General Assembly should not lead to blind protection of the status quo in the Secretariat or in the General Assembly. We need the organisation to be stronger and more efficient. There is a good deal of room for improvement that would benefit the real clientele of the organisation, namely the people of the world.

We concur with the main thrust of the Secretary-General's proposals on human resource management, budget and finance, but we need more clarity on the operative consequences of some of these proposals. In particular, we believe it is of the utmost importance to ensure that the organisation possesses the best relevant competence, and we see a need for improvements both in the recruitment system, to make programme managers more accountable for their decisions, and in personnel management. As Article 101 of the Charter states, "The paramount consideration in employment of staff and in determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity."

A number of the proposals put forward in this report do not seem to require legislative action by the General Assembly, as the follow-up action falls under the Secretary-General's authority as Chief Executive Officer. We would like to learn more about these initiatives, and we understand that specific guidance and decisions from the General Assembly might be necessary at a later stage.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, Norway remains fully committed to the United Nations' Charter. In many of our current discussions, including the discussions on management reform, the Charter still reflects our highest ideals and objectives. But while we must preserve what we have achieved, we must continually adapt and improve the organisation to meet the needs of a changing world.

We are looking forward to thorough and fruitful discussions in the Committee.

Thank you.