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Agenda item 8

Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-eighth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2006-2007

(Item 3 (a))

Report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2006-2007

1. At its 4th meeting, on 10 June 2008, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/63/70).
2. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, the Controller, introduced the report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report. Representatives of the Office of Internal Oversight Services were also present.

Discussion

3. Delegations welcomed the report and expressed their overall approval of its conclusions. Support was expressed for the need to enhance inter-agency interaction and coordination.
4. Several delegations noted the late issuance of the report and the Secretariat was encouraged to respect the rules regarding the issuance of documentation. The recurrent late submission of documents in all official languages was seen as pointing to fundamental, perhaps cyclic, issues in the governance and management of the



Organization. It was suggested that the Secretariat analyse the issues at hand and propose solutions.

5. In that regard, the intention of the Secretary-General to include, in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, an indicator of achievement on the timely submission of pre-session documents under executive direction and management for each department was welcomed.

6. Concern was expressed regarding the methodological problems in respect of formulating and measuring performance. It was noted that those issues were meant to be addressed within the context of the report dated 19 February 2008 of the Secretary-General on the accountability framework, enterprise risk management and internal control framework, and results-based management framework (A/62/701 and Corr.1).

7. The question was raised regarding what information that report provided to Member States on the Organization's actual impact during the biennium.

8. The view was expressed that planning and budgeting constituted the key process in the United Nations, as in any organization. As such, the process should allow the intergovernmental bodies to prioritize objectives and allocate resources accordingly. Therefore, Member States and the Secretariat must find ways to improve that process so that it became both simpler and more meaningful. There should be more focus on genuine results-based management and less focus on the allocation of individual posts to individual units and measurement of output-based implementation rates.

9. The Secretariat was commended for achieving an output implementation rate of 89 per cent, but the view was expressed that that figure represented a 1 per cent decrease from the previous biennium, and the Secretariat was asked to determine and address the cause of the decrease.

10. Concern was expressed about the low output implementation rates for safety and security and disarmament, and it was noted that implementation rates for the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific were also relatively low. The Secretariat was encouraged to improve those rates.

11. It was noted that peacekeeping operations had reached an implementation rate of 100 per cent, but it was also pointed out that the Organization was still undertaking two very difficult peacekeeping operations (the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad), which continued to affect peace and stability in Africa.

12. Specific questions were raised regarding what programme managers and their staff had done to improve their performance in the area of utilizing programme performance data in decision-making, why the United Nations information centres did not have Chinese-language websites, and the Secretariat's plans for filling vacancies expeditiously and for succession planning in the conference-servicing area at the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

13. The Secretariat was encouraged to take effective action to address each of those issues.

14. The point was made that perhaps an enterprise resource planning system could assist in improving planning, including the planning of producing reports.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. The Committee expressed its regret that the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2006-2007 had not been issued in accordance with the six-week rule and, in that regard, the Committee reiterated the need to improve the responsiveness and accountability of procedures within the Secretariat and to ensure the timely issuance of all relevant documents in accordance with the six-week rule, in order to guarantee their proper consideration by the Committee in the discharge of its mandate.

16. The Committee recognized the methodological problems encountered in preparing that report and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to make methodological changes related to the improvement of the quality of the formulation of expected accomplishments and performance indicators in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, taking into account the comments of the Committee.

17. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to propose modifications to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation¹ so as to move the Organization beyond results-based budgeting towards genuine results-based management, taking into account any decision the Assembly might take within the context of the report of the Secretary-General on the accountability framework, enterprise risk management and internal control framework, and results-based management framework.

18. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly decide to use the detailed results set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2006-2007 in reviewing the proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011.

19. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly recommend that all programme managers be held accountable for the achievement of results and for documenting progress towards fulfilling the commitments made in the programme budget through the request for compliance reports at the subprogramme level and the inclusion of the related management responsibilities in the performance appraisal process.

20. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide comprehensive information, in future reports on the programme performance of the United Nations, on all relevant cross-cutting issues.

21. The Committee, having considered the need of Member States to better understand the impact of the different activities, recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide more detailed information on the outcome of monitoring and evaluation at the departmental

¹ ST/SGB/2000/8.

and executive levels, taking into account, in particular, how lessons learned were shared and applied in planning activities.

22. While recognizing the progress achieved in the presentation of the information regarding challenges, obstacles and unmet goals, the Committee considered that that information had not been consistent across all programmes. In that regard, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to improve consistency and harmonize the presentation of the information across all programmes.
