



General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
3 December 2008

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 7th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 15 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Bródi (Hungary)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Ms. McLurg

Contents

Agenda item 116: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Agenda item 119: Programme planning

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

08-55013 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 116: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of

Auditors (A/63/5 (Vols. I, III, IV) and Add.1, Add.2 and Add.2/Corr.1, Add.3-10, Add.11 and Add.11/Corr.1, and Add.12, A/63/169, A/63/327 and Add.1 and A/63/474)

1. **Mr. Myard** (Chairman of the Audit Operations Committee of the Board of Auditors), introducing the Board of Auditors' reports to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, said that the Board, for the first time, had conducted all its audits and presented its reports in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing, rather than the Common Auditing Standards of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors which had previously guided its work. It had also introduced a consistent layout for its reports, of which there were 19 for the current session. Sixteen related to the financial statements of the United Nations and its funds and programmes, all but one for the biennium ended 31 December 2007, with the remaining report, that for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), relating to the year ended 31 December 2007. The main findings of the 16 reports were summed up in a further report, the concise summary of principal findings and conclusions (A/63/169). The Board had also issued, and would introduce to the Committee at a later date, its annual report on the capital master plan (A/63/5 (Vol. V)), and a report on the activities of the Procurement Task Force prepared at the request of the General Assembly (A/63/167).

2. The Board had issued unqualified audit opinions for seven entities and modified audit reports with various emphases of matter for nine entities. The emphases of matter related to issues including negative reserves and fund balances, unconfirmed inter-fund balances, inadequate accounting for expendable and non-expendable property and inaccurate monitoring of nationally executed expenditure.

3. While welcoming the disclosure for the first time of end-of-service and post-retirement liabilities, mainly after-service health insurance, in response to the requests of the General Assembly, the Board emphasized the inconsistencies in treatment from organization to organization of the liabilities and their funding. The Board likewise noted the efforts of all the entities in the United Nations Finance and Budget Network to adopt International Public Sector

Accounting Standards (IPSAS), but expressed concern regarding the delay in the funding of the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system in the United Nations Secretariat and the consequent risk of delay in the implementation of IPSAS. In the same connection, the Board raised the question of inconsistencies in the format of the financial statements of the United Nations and its funds and programmes.

4. With regard to action on previous recommendations, the Board found that, of the total of 788 recommendations made in previous bienniums, 505 (64 per cent) had been fully implemented, 250 (32 per cent) had been partially implemented, 19 (2 per cent) had not been implemented and 14 (2 per cent) had been overtaken by events.

5. Finally, he recalled that the reports of the Board represented the only assessment of accountability that the General Assembly received from independent external experts. The Board viewed itself as a partner of the United Nations and its funds and programmes in the field of governance, and, within the bounds of its authority and mandate, would help the Organization to further the various reform initiatives undertaken.

6. **Ms. Hurtz-Soyka** (Director, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management) introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in its reports on the United Nations and the funds and programmes for the financial period ended 31 December 2007 (A/63/327 and Add.1), submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/216 B, indicated that document A/63/327 contained information on the United Nations and the capital master plan, while its addendum, A/63/327/Add.1, contained information on the United Nations funds and programmes.

7. Every effort had been made to comply with the General Assembly's repeated requests to the Secretary-General, most recently in resolution 62/223 A, to indicate expected time frames for the implementation of recommendations of the Board, along with priorities and office-holders bearing accountability for implementation. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/212 B, responsibility for implementing the Board's recommendations had been assigned to programme managers. While they had established target dates in most of the cases before the Committee, some targets depended on IPSAS or ERP

implementation, or on action to be taken by the General Assembly. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/216 B, the Secretary-General had indicated which recommendations required such action. While all recommendations that were accepted would be implemented in a timely manner, those categorized by the Board as main recommendations were considered to have the highest priority.

8. By informing the Board of the comments of the Secretary-General on its findings and recommendations in advance, for the Board to take into account in its own report, the Administration had been able to streamline the Secretary-General's report by including only comments on matters requiring further clarification. However, in accordance with the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 10 of resolution 62/223 A, the report of the Secretary-General provided additional information for all recommendations relating to prior periods that, in the view of the Board, had not been fully implemented.

9. In the case of recommendations addressed to the United Nations, the Secretariat would provide further information and explanation if necessary. In the case of recommendations addressed to the funds and programmes, it would be for their Executive Heads to do so.

10. **Mr. Kelapile** (Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial reports and audited financial statements and reports of the Board of Auditors for the period ended 31 December 2007 (A/63/474), said that the Advisory Committee welcomed the continued high quality of the reports of the Board and the Board's collaboration and coordination with other oversight bodies as ensuring the optimal use of audit resources. However, the format of the Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of recommendations of the Board could be better structured in order to facilitate cross-referencing with the reports of the Board.

11. As many of the issues addressed by the Board were relevant to other reports being considered by the Advisory Committee at its current session, in particular those on construction and major maintenance projects, human resources management and information technology, including the enterprise resource planning system and the International Public Sector Accounting

Standards, the Advisory Committee would draw on the Board's observations on those issues.

12. Recalling the Board's gap analysis regarding IPSAS and ERP implementation, the Advisory Committee noted that United Nations entities were at different stages in their preparations for IPSAS, and that a number of challenges remained. At the United Nations, the delay in funding the ERP system would have a direct impact on IPSAS implementation, which, rather than taking place as originally planned in 2010, would probably be postponed until 2011 at the earliest. The Advisory Committee also believed that the application of IPSAS must be monitored closely to ensure consistency within the United Nations system, and that the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) should continue to play a key role in that respect.

13. Recalling that, owing to the complexities of the United Nations system, the introduction of IPSAS was not expected to result automatically in the system-wide consolidation of financial statements, though it could serve as a tool for comparing and analysing the activities of various entities within the system, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should keep consolidation or aggregation of the financial statements of the United Nations under review as the Organizations migrated to IPSAS. Particularly in the context of the introduction of IPSAS, the Administration should address urgently the matter of improper accounting for non-expendable property, a recurring theme in both external and internal audit reviews.

14. Concerned at the Board's observation that Headquarters lacked an adequate understanding of the actual use and configuration of work areas and had no overall strategy for the use of office space, the Advisory Committee concurred with the Board's recommendations that the Administration should formulate written procedures for space management and ensure their application. The Advisory Committee also shared the Board's view concerning the importance of a robust, long-term, regular maintenance plan, in particular at the Organization's headquarters locations, in order to avoid cumulative problems leading to costly, major repairs and renovations. Recalling the comments contained in its separate report on construction of office and conference facilities in Vienna, Addis Ababa and Nairobi (A/63/465), the Advisory Committee agreed with the Board that the

Secretariat in New York should play a coordinating role in planning, managing and monitoring such projects.

15. Having noted the Board's observation that continued weaknesses had been identified at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in connection with the financial management of nationally executed projects, the Advisory Committee concurred with the Board that adequate controls, including a functioning oversight process, must be put in place in order to ensure the success of the risk-based assessment model for such projects, as introduced at UNDP in 2007. The lessons learned from that model at UNDP should be shared with the other funds and programmes. While noting the Board's generally favourable observations on internal audit functions at the United Nations and the funds and programmes, the Advisory Committee was concerned that the internal audit functions of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and UNDP did not fulfil their audit workplans.

16. Finally, the Advisory Committee encouraged the Secretary-General to designate focal points in each department or office to facilitate the implementation of the Board's recommendations and ensure accountability for the requisite action. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee took the view that the Board should strengthen its validation process, in order to improve its ability to evaluate results and the impact of efforts to implement its recommendations.

17. **Mr. Cazalet** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, expressed concern at the greatly increased number of modified reports with emphasis of matter paragraphs issued by the Board. As a matter of priority, the Secretariat should address the persistent problem of deficient asset management identified by the Board in successive reports, and also pointed out by the Advisory Committee.

18. Implementation of IPSAS, a serious challenge for the Organization, should be closely monitored through regular reporting to the General Assembly and audits by the Board. As the Advisory Committee had indicated, particular care must be taken to ensure consistency within the United Nations system. In addition, the Secretariat should fully exploit the advantages of IPSAS, particularly in the field of asset management. The European Union would also pay close attention to other issues on which the Board had made observations, including ERP, the funding of after-service health insurance and the absence of an overall strategy for the use of office space. He emphasized the importance of ensuring implementation of the recommendations of the Board and said that the Independent Audit Advisory Committee and other auditing structures played an important role in keeping the appropriate bodies informed of progress in establishing effective methods of monitoring and accountability.

19. **Mr. Hunte** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and emphasizing the important role played by the internal and external oversight bodies in general and the Board in particular, said that the Group welcomed the changes in the presentation of the Board's reports, and the addition of a summary of findings and recommendations. It concurred with those findings and recommendations, and praised the Board's continued collaboration and coordination with other oversight bodies, including the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Joint Inspection Unit.

20. Timely implementation of the Board's recommendations was essential in ensuring that the Administration adhered to proper procedures and practices and full disclosure in financial statements. Although the significant improvement in the rate of implementation was positive, the fact that some unimplemented recommendations dated back to the 1998-1999 and 2000-2001 bienniums was cause for concern. As responsibility for implementing the Board's recommendations remained with the Administration, it must assign accountability to specific office-holders. The Group therefore concurred with the Advisory Committee recommendations that the Secretary-General should designate focal points in each department or office to facilitate the implementation process and ensure accountability for the requisite action, and that the Board should

strengthen its validation process in order to better evaluate the results and impact of the Administration's implementation efforts.

21. The Group was concerned to note the Board's finding that the share of successful candidates in competitive examinations from countries either unrepresented or underrepresented in the Organization had decreased, and reiterated that achieving equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among staff should be a priority for the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes. Steps should be taken to address that situation by ensuring transparency and accountability at all levels for selection, recruitment and placement.

22. The recommendations of the Board regarding the capital master plan should be implemented in a timely and effective manner. In that connection, the Administration should take action on the as yet unimplemented recommendations for the establishment of an advisory board and for the separation of current and investment expenditure, both reiterated in the Board's current report. The Group also hoped that the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) would address the asset-management shortcomings highlighted by the Board in its modified audit report.

23. **Mr. Potts** (United States of America) emphasized the Committee's reliance on the reports of the Board, which were essential to enable Member States to exercise their fiduciary responsibilities, ensuring that funds were used efficiently and for their intended purpose, and to increase transparency and accountability. He hoped that the rate of implementation of the Board's recommendations would continue its upward trend. However, his delegation, concerned at the increase in reports including matters of emphasis, urged the entities audited to address those comments by the Board.

24. While the coordination between the Board and OIOS to avoid duplication of effort was positive, he recalled the recommendations of the Board and the Advisory Committee that the OIOS Internal Audit Division should improve the overall audit process and the low rate of completion of planned audit assignments. It was also difficult for the Board to perform its functions properly or make a comparative analysis of audited entities while financial statements were not prepared on a common basis. His delegation wondered at the Board's recommendation that new

Professional-level staff should receive instruction in French if they were not already fluent in both working languages of the Organization, as it could not see a connection with the auditing of financial statements.

25. A further source of concern was the continued inadequacy in the recording of non-expendable property, noted by the Board of Auditors and the Independent Audit Advisory Committee. The situation represented a serious lapse in internal controls and required appropriate and urgent attention. His delegation also expected programme managers to implement the recommendations of the Board to improve results-based budgeting and results-based management, having found that indicators, goals and outcomes, particularly for technical cooperation activities, were ill-defined.

26. The Organization should provide better documentation in connection with the use of contractors. With procurement being a high-risk area, his delegation wished to know what improvements had been made since the Board had found instances of shortcomings including failure to adhere to the Procurement Manual, inadequate screening of vendors, particularly against the list of suppliers prohibited in connection with Security Council resolution 1267 (1999), and non-compliance with United Nations system accounting standards and the Financial Regulations and Rules. It was concerned at the rise in fraud, and wished to know the reasons for that situation, the counter-measures taken and the punishments applied.

27. While welcoming the progress made by the Office of the Capital Master Plan, his delegation had taken note of the concerns of the Board concerning the lack of a summary scoreboard to monitor essential elements of the project, the need for an updated global cost estimate for the project to reflect the adoption of the accelerated construction strategy and design changes, and the difficulties caused by the different presentation of expenditure as recorded by the Secretariat and forecasts as recorded by the Office of the Capital Master Plan. His delegation also recalled the Board's concern that lengthy decision-making processes could negate the benefits of the accelerated strategy.

28. Effective oversight, such as that performed by the Board, could only make the Organization's activities stronger, as recovered resources could be reused,

inefficient practices could be terminated, and culpable officials could be held accountable. Member States must therefore take whatever action was necessary to ensure that managers implemented audit recommendations expeditiously.

29. **Ms. Tomita** (Japan) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretariat's continuing efforts to appropriately manage trust funds. However, it had noted that, while observations on inactive trust funds had been included in the Board of Auditors' report for the biennium ended 31 December 2005 (A/61/5 (Vol. I)), no such information had been provided in the report for the biennium ended 31 December 2007 (A/63/5 (Vol. I)). It therefore urged the Board to include a list of inactive funds in its future reports.

30. With regard to the inactive trust funds that were being considered for closure, the remaining balances should be returned to the respective donors and procedures for closing the funds should be initiated in a timely manner.

31. In its report for the biennium ended December 2005, the Board of Auditors had stated that 35 trust funds were inactive. However, only 13 of those funds had been closed during the biennium 2006-2007. Steps should be taken to close the remaining inactive trust funds.

32. During the biennium 2006-2007, 39 trust funds had not shown any expenditure. Japan would like to know whether those funds were to be closed and how the closure would be handled. It would seek a detailed explanation in informal consultations.

Agenda item 119: Programme planning (A/63/6 (Part one and Progs. 1-13, Prog. 14/Rev.1, Progs. 15 and 16, Prog. 17 and Prog. 17/Corr.1, Progs. 18-22, Prog. 23 and Prog. 23/Corr.1 and Progs. 24-27), A/63/16 and A/63/70)

33. **Mr. Ren Yisheng** (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), introducing the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) on its forty-eighth session (A/63/16), said that the report contained the Committee's conclusions and recommendations on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2006-2007; the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011; a number of evaluation reports issued by the Office of Internal Oversight Services; coordination issues, including the United

Nations System Chief Executives Board and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); and ways of improving CPC's working methods and procedures within the framework of its mandate.

34. With regard to the programme performance of the United Nations for 2006-2007, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had recommended that the General Assembly should 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 Evaluation 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 (A/62/701 and Add.1).

35. With respect to the proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011, part one (plan outline) and part two (biennial programme plan), the Committee for Programme and Coordination had made substantive recommendations regarding 26 of the 27 programmes. Owing to shortage of time, it had decided to recommend that the General Assembly should allocate programme 19, Human rights, to the Third Committee under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning".

36. The Committee for Programme and Coordination had recommended that the General Assembly should approve the priorities for the period 2010-2011 contained in paragraph 45 of the plan outline and that it should further review the outline to reflect more accurately the Organization's longer-term objectives, based on the mandates approved by Member States.

37. With regard to evaluations, CPC had made recommendations on the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. It had recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to continue to implement remaining recommendations from the thematic evaluation and, in respect of the in-depth evaluation of special political missions led by the Department of Political Affairs but administered by the Department of Field Support, it had recommended that the General Assembly should endorse the recommendations contained in the report, subject to a number of modifications.

38. Regarding coordination, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had made a number of recommendations relating to the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2007/08. It had recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of that Board, to provide, in his future annual overview reports, specific information on the main difficulties encountered in the implementation of the coordination activities in different sectors, the solutions adopted and the impact of the Chief Executives Board's activities on the United Nations system.

39. The Committee for Programme and Coordination had also made recommendations relating to the Secretary-General's report on United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development and had noted the key achievements by the United Nations system in fulfilling its role in implementing that Partnership.

40. CPC had noted with appreciation the progress made in improving its working methods and procedures; it had reaffirmed the importance of further improving its working methods and had decided to remain seized of the matter.

41. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/63/6 (Part one and Progs. 1-13, Prog. 14/Rev.1, Progs. 15 and 16, Prog. 17 and Prog. 17/Corr.1, Progs. 18-22, Prog. 23 and Prog. 23/Corr.1 and Progs. 24-27)), said that the strategic framework had been prepared in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269, which requested the Secretary-General to prepare a strategic framework on a biennial basis.

42. By the same resolution, the General Assembly had affirmed that the strategic framework should constitute the principal policy directive of the United Nations. The strategic framework for 2010-2011, the first in the present Secretary-General's term, also took into account the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 59/275, 61/235 and 62/224.

43. The proposed strategic framework was one of the fundamental instruments guiding the work of the Organization as a whole. Part one, containing the plan outline, highlighted the longer-term objectives and priorities, while part two, containing the biennial programme plan covered 27 programmes. The proposed strategic framework was a translation of legislative mandates and formed the basis for the biennial programme budget proposals for 2010-2011. A summary listing of key legislative mandates had been included at the end of each programme.

44. The plan outline had been prepared with the full involvement of the Secretary-General and the senior management of the Secretariat. The longer-term objectives reflected the views of the Secretary-General and the guidance received from Member States, notably through CPC and the General Assembly, with respect to priorities. Regarding the priorities for 2010-2011, the Secretary-General proposed to adhere closely to the eight priorities previously identified by the General Assembly for the periods from 1998 through 2007, as reflected in chapter III of the report.

45. Promoting economic growth and sustainable development, responding to unprecedented challenges to international peace and security and enhancing respect for human rights around the world represented the abiding long-term objectives of the Organization and the three pillars of its work, namely peace and security, development and human rights, as agreed at the 2005 World Summit. In seeking to achieve them, the Organization would be guided by three key principles of action: delivering results for people most in need; creating a stronger United Nations through full accountability; and securing global goods for a peaceful and better world in the twenty-first century.

46. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/269, the Secretariat would ensure that programmes were updated to reflect the impact of intergovernmental decisions taken subsequent to the preparation of the strategic framework. Each programme would be subject to detailed review in the context of budget preparation for 2010-2011 to take into account all relevant legislative mandates. Programmatic adjustments not reflected at the time of the General Assembly's adoption of the strategic framework would be submitted for review by the Fifth Committee in 2009.

47. The proposed strategic framework had already been subject to intergovernmental review by sectoral, functional and regional bodies. In a number of cases, the reviews had taken place prior to finalization of the strategic framework and the outcomes of the reviews had been incorporated in the proposals. In other instances, intergovernmental review had been carried out after finalization of the initial proposals and CPC had been provided with modifications when it had reviewed the proposed strategic framework in July 2008.

48. The proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011 had benefited from experience gained since the logical framework showing the relationship among objectives, strategy, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement had first been applied for the 2002-2007 period. Reporting on results achieved, as presented in the programme performance report for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/63/70), had also contributed to a better understanding of the logical framework, the management of the work programme, and the crucial role of feedback in the cycle of planning, programme design and programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

49. **Mr. Baez** (Chief, Oversight Support Unit), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/63/70), said that the report contained information on the production of outputs — the traditional measure of performance — and provided an overall account of the results obtained by the Organization as reported by the different departments.

50. In its resolution 61/245, the General Assembly had decided that responsibility for the performance programme report should be transferred from OIOS to the Department of Management. As a transitional arrangement, the report before the Committee had been jointly produced by the respective programme managers and Headquarters departments.

51. The report provided an overview of the results attained by the Secretariat over the biennium 2006-2007, a summary of output implementation statistics, data on resource utilization, a statement of appropriations for the biennium, recommendations considered by CPC in June 2008, and a chapter on programme performance under each section of the programme budget. The report constituted the first

attempt to introduce a section on results achieved by the Organization.

52. Of the 31 budget sections and subsections listed in the report, 23 had achieved total implementation rates of 90 per cent or higher with regard to output delivery, compared to 25 in the previous biennium. Five had implementation rates between 80 and 90 per cent, compared to four in the previous biennium; and only two budget sections had implementation rates lower than 80 per cent, namely, disarmament (65 per cent) and safety and security (50 per cent), the reasons for which had been provided in the report.

53. Analysis of information on achievements during the 2006-2007 biennium indicated that they had been significant.

54. The Secretary-General was striving to give more importance to qualitative assessment of programme implementation and to ensure that all programme managers utilized programme performance data more effectively in decision-making.

55. Although methodological problems persisted, the Secretariat would continue to move towards a results-based management culture in which the achievement of results was not only a reporting requirement but also an effective management tool for understanding what had worked well and why. That was an ongoing process to which the Secretary-General remained fully committed.

56. **Mr. Hunte** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that programme planning dealt with the crucial task of transforming intergovernmental mandates into programmes for their actual implementation.

57. The Group of 77 attached great importance to the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. CPC was responsible not only for making recommendations on programme design based on its interpretation of the legislative intent but also for developing evaluation procedures to be used in programme design. The work of CPC facilitated the Fifth Committee's consideration of programming matters and essentially served as the starting point for intergovernmental consideration of the strategic framework plan.

58. Since 2008 was an off-budget year, CPC had reviewed the proposed strategic framework for 2010-2011. The Group of 77 endorsed the recommendations

in the CPC report (A/63/16), particularly the overarching recommendation that programme managers should further improve the formulation of expected accomplishments to better reflect all intergovernmental mandates.

59. The Group reiterated the importance of the longer-term objectives of the Organization, aimed at ensuring the full achievement of its goals, and supported CPC's recommendation that future plan outlines should be prepared taking fully into account the guidelines provided by the General Assembly so as to ensure that those objectives were based on the mandates approved by Member States.

60. With respect to programme performance for the biennium 2006-2007, the Group acknowledged the improved formulation of expected accomplishments and performance indicators and trusted that the results set out in the programme performance report (A/63/70) would be utilized in the formulation of future strategic frameworks. In that connection, CPC had recommended that programme managers should be held accountable for the achievement of results and for providing more detailed information on how lessons were learned and shared.

61. The Group welcomed the efforts of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination to enhance coordination and effectiveness in the United Nations system and had taken note of its annual overview report for 2007/08 (E/2008/58). It appreciated the cooperation between CEB, the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit and encouraged CEB to continue its efforts to strengthen that cooperation. In particular, the Group appreciated the Board's efforts to coordinate United Nations system activities to alleviate hunger and poverty. It agreed with CPC that the Board's future reports should include information on measures taken to improve transparency and accountability as well as specific information on the main difficulties encountered in the implementation of coordination activities.

62. Lastly, the Group believed that the United Nations system played a fundamental role in the implementation of NEPAD. The Board must therefore continue to ensure effective coordination with that body.

63. **Mr. Cazalet** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its forty-eighth

session (A/63/16) provided useful guidelines for budget planning, while taking into account the priorities identified by the General Assembly.

64. The European Union welcomed the measures adopted by CPC to improve its decision-making and trusted that they would continue to be implemented. Such measures as briefings for delegations on items under consideration, more consultations with both experts and the Secretariat and more informal consultations would enable CPC to formulate budget guidelines and facilitate coordination so that duplication and inefficiency were avoided.

65. The Secretariat's assistance was essential to the work of CPC; in that regard there was a need for closer dialogue between CPC and Secretariat departments.

66. **Ms. Norman** (United States of America) said that CPC had been established in the expectation that it would serve as a tool for coordinating activities in the United Nations system. The United States had firmly supported the creation of CPC, but it must do more to ensure maximum use of the resources provided by Member States. Her delegation supported the majority of the recommendations contained in CPC's report (A/63/16) and looked forward to discussing the issues in greater depth in informal consultations.

67. Regarding CPC's longer-term prospects, she recalled the overall conclusion contained in the recent report of OIOS on results-based management at the United Nations (A/63/268) that results-based management had been an administrative chore of little value to accountability and decision-making. OIOS had discussed such problems as vague indicators and self-serving statements of results and had recommended, inter alia, revisions to the regulations governing programme planning. Since Member States had an interest in making the United Nations more effective and efficient, CPC should become a champion for better results-based management. It could, for example, address the shortcomings raised by OIOS.

68. Member States might also consider whether the mandate of CPC should be revised to better enable it to make recommendations on operational improvements and/or shifts within programmatic clusters and whether there was a way to better utilize the evaluations produced by OIOS. CPC should provide action-oriented recommendations rather than serving as yet another venue for Member States to debate their views.

69. Sound programme planning was essential to the Organization's success. If there was no effective coordination among programmes and activities, valuable resources would continue to be wasted and Member States would not achieve their desired objectives.

70. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan) said that, over the past few years, his delegation had expressed concern at CPC's tendency to deviate from its evaluation and coordination role and to focus on issues related to management and resources rather than evaluating the efficient implementation of programmes and activities and the attainment of results. It was also concerned that CPC had not seriously engaged in discussion of programmatic aspects.

71. His delegation noted that CPC had failed to hold extensive discussions on improving its working methods, and had not produced outputs in line with its terms of reference. Overall, his delegation remained concerned about the effectiveness and relevance of its work.

72. By its resolution 62/278, the General Assembly had called upon its subsidiary organs, to improve the implementation of mandates, address the continuing validity of legislative decisions and ensure effective coordination in accordance with the regulations and rules governing programme planning. In view of the need for programme planning at the United Nations, CPC must enhance its efforts to fulfil its original mandate.

73. **Mr. Spirin** (Russian Federation) said that CPC should be guided by the principle that the expected accomplishments of the Secretariat and the associated strategy should coincide fully with the mandates conferred by intergovernmental bodies. Indicators of achievement should therefore be closely matched to expected accomplishments and be evaluated in quality and quantity terms. The programme planning process should help Member States to assess how effectively goals were achieved, and whether the resources allocated enabled the goals to be met in full.

74. His delegation regretted the inability of CPC to reach consensus on programme 19, Human rights. It urged the Secretariat, when preparing the next plan outline, to avoid repeating the current plan outline's use of terms which had not been agreed at the intergovernmental level and which were interpreted differently by different Member States. Examples

included the use, in paragraphs 18 and 20 of document A/63/6 (Part one), of the terms "humanitarian reform" and "cluster approach".

75. His delegation, recalling that CPC, since its thirty-eighth session, had considered how to improve its working methods and procedures, noted that recent sessions had yielded considerable progress. He therefore hoped that future sessions would concentrate on substantive issues unrelated to the highly politicized matter of working methods.

76. **Mr. Ren Yisheng** (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said, in reply to the comment by the representative of the United States that CPC could address the shortcomings raised by OIOS and make recommendations to correct them, that CPC had in fact taken the OIOS evaluation reports under consideration. However, any change in the role of CPC would have to be decided by the General Assembly.

77. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, based on the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the General Committee, the General Assembly had allocated the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" to the Third Committee as well as all other Main Committees. Based on CPC's recommendation, programme 19, Human rights, had been allocated to the Third Committee under that agenda item. Since the Third Committee would report directly to the General Assembly on programme 19, it would not be considered by the Fifth Committee.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.