



# General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

## Official Records

Distr.: General  
27 May 2003

Original: English

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### Fifth Committee

#### Summary record of the 44th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 March 2003, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Sharma . . . . . (Nepal)  
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Mselle

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

### **Welcome to the new Under-Secretary-General for Management**

1. **The Chairman** welcomed Ms. Bertini, the new Under-Secretary-General for Management, who had served as the Executive Director of the World Food Programme for ten years. She had been credited with assisting hundreds of millions of victims of wars and natural disasters throughout the world and with modernizing the administration of the Programme to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

2. **Ms. Bertini** (Under-Secretary-General for Management) said that she looked forward to working with the Committee on strengthening the United Nations both in its day-to-day operations and in the long term, particularly with a view to implementing the Secretary-General's reform agenda.

3. She hoped to have open and frequent communication with Committee members on the significant issues for 2003, including the support account for peacekeeping, the financing of the peacekeeping operations and the review of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. She pledged her assistance and that of her colleagues in the Department of Management, and said that she looked forward to working with the Controller, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Central Support Services. She would be happy to meet members of the Committee both formally and informally at any time to facilitate communication in the interests of the United Nations.

4. **Mr. Zevelakis** (Greece), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that the most valuable asset of the United Nations was its staff. The Under-Secretary-General's support for human resources management would make for an effective, efficient results-oriented approach and would enhance the financial well-being of the Organization. Financial stability was a prerequisite for achieving the aims of the United Nations, and he looked forward to a presentation on the financial situation of the Organization. The new challenge of the twenty-first

century was to create a modern organization that responded to present needs.

5. **Ms. Afifi** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, assured the Under-Secretary-General that the Group was willing to work closely with her. She was convinced that her human and professional qualities, experience and expertise would enable her to carry out her duties effectively.

6. **Mr. Kramer** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that the Under-Secretary-General's new responsibilities were of immense importance for the sound and purposeful functioning of the Organization. She had a history of leadership in addressing development and humanitarian requirements in many parts of the globe. That link between management and key substantive goals could only help to ensure that the United Nations did "what mattered", as urged by the Secretary-General in his report on the strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387).

7. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Under-Secretary-General's arrival was most opportune, at a time when the reform process was taking root and required additional contributions. He assured her of the full cooperation of the African Group, and thanked her predecessor, Mr. Joseph Connor, for his outstanding contribution to the work of the Organization.

8. **Mr. Vixay** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Asian Group, said that the position of Under-Secretary-General for Management had a direct and enormous impact on the effectiveness of the United Nations system. He believed that the new Under-Secretary-General would be able to further strengthen the operational activities of the United Nations system, thereby benefiting all Member States. Her skills in financial matters would ensure a healthier budget and enable the United Nations to implement the Millennium Development Goals and the Secretary-General's reform package.

9. **Mr. Prica** (Bosnia and Herzegovina), speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, said that, under the leadership of the new Under-Secretary-General, human resources and gender balance would be strengthened and information and communication technologies updated. Her financial skills would be important in helping the Fifth Committee to complete its work during a year when the budget was to be discussed.

10. **Ms. Jackson** (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, said that, as Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ms. Bertini had broadened its focus to empower women to escape poverty and ensure food security. Her expertise and experience in management would clearly be valuable in her new position.

11. **Mr. Iida** (Japan) said he looked forward to working with the Under-Secretary-General on issues such as the achievement of equitable geographical representation and the need to re-allocate resources from obsolete to priority activities. He hoped that the Secretariat would make a presentation on the financial situation of the United Nations in the near future.

12. **Mr. Kennedy** (United States of America) said he believed that the Under-Secretary-General had the talent to contribute to joint efforts to implement the Secretary-General's strong commitment to reform, and he assured her of his delegation's full cooperation.

13. **The Chairman** said that the Under-Secretary-General was one of the few women leaders at the United Nations to leave her mark with such extraordinary vision and leadership. By appointing her, the Secretary-General had recognized her qualifications and experience. Her performance at the World Food Programme would be a good guide to what the Committee could expect. She would help the United Nations to improve its resource management in the light of the current financial challenge.

#### **Agenda item 112: Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003** (*continued*)

*Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the results approach in the United Nations: implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration*  
(*continued*) (A/57/372 and Add.1)

*Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system*  
(*continued*) (A/57/434, paras. 5 and 6, and A/57/442 and Add.1)

14. **Ms. Sánchez Lorenzo** (Cuba) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the results approach in the United Nations: implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/57/372) had the merit of seeking alternatives to the system's management problems.

15. It had taken Member States and the Secretariat several years to understand, adopt and implement the results-based system, and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had stated that the terms used in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning should be considered for possible change by the General Assembly only after considerable experience had been gained with results-based budgeting (A/55/543, para. 12). The experience acquired to date was limited in that the system had first been applied in the programme budget for 2002-2003 and the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. All new experiments encountered difficulties that were resolved with time, and it would be inappropriate to change the system at a time when the Organization had yet to see the benefits of results-based budgeting.

16. Her delegation agreed that the Secretariat's work could not be assessed on the basis of what Member States were able or willing to do in their countries. In order to ascertain whether the Organization was efficiently fulfilling its mandate by assessing its implementation, it was vital to improve staff training and to encourage programme managers to take an interest in applying results-based budgeting.

17. Many recent changes had been the result of the inclusion of the Millennium Development Goals in budgets and programmes. Further implementation of those goals depended more on the commitment of the international community than on additional changes to the programme and budget system.

18. **Ms. Bertrand** (Joint Inspection Unit) agreed that the report was a work in progress, and that both the Secretariat and Member States needed to encourage efforts. The credibility of the results-based exercise lay in perfecting it. The results-based approach was pivotal to the United Nations system and to doing "what mattered". It would also let the outside world know about the important work of the United Nations and would enable the Organization to evaluate the benefit of its actions to Member States.

19. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) asked whether the report on the results-based approach would indeed be examined by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), as intimated by Ms. Bertrand the previous day. His delegation felt that it would be appropriate for CPC to review both the first and second part of the report.

20. **Ms. Bertrand** (Joint Inspection Unit) agreed that it would be natural for a Committee dealing with programme content to consider her report.

21. **Mr. Bouheddou** (Algeria) suggested that the report should be discussed by the General Assembly in plenary session under the agenda item on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

22. **Ms. Bertrand** (Joint Inspection Unit) replied that she supported that idea, but that it was up to Member States to decide.

23. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that, given that the issue had been raised during the video link with Geneva, he was disappointed at the lack of response to his question about the cost of the two JIU reports. He had made the request in the interests of budget transparency and the need for full disclosure.

24. **The Chairman** said the Secretariat would send a communiqué to Geneva when the meeting adjourned in the hope that a reply would be forthcoming in time for the informal consultations that afternoon.

*The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.*