

***Delegation from  
The Republic from Latvia***

***Position Paper for the General Assembly Fifth Committee***

The issues before the General Assembly Fifth Committee are: Improving Mechanisms for Accountability and Transparency within the UN System; Strengthening Compliance and Accountability in Field Missions with Special Regard to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Cases; and Consideration of the Secretary-General's Reform Proposals. Latvia has long been playing an active role in pushing forward improvement in the United Nations, for the purpose that the organization can be a place where more voices can be heard, and a place where international disputes can be better solved.

**I. Improving Mechanisms for Accountability and Transparency within the UN System**

"We all must work together to ensure that our Organization functions better and is fit for its purpose," said RAIMONDS VĒJONIS, President of Latvia, at the General Debate of the 72nd Session. Latvia deeply recognizes that a comprehensive accountability system is urgently needed in the UN, and keeps seeking cooperation with the UN and other Member States to strengthen the Organization. Latvia concedes that since 2010 Secretary-General's report *Towards an Accountability System in Secretariat* (A/64/640), great efforts have been made in constructing an accountability system within the Secretariat. Latvia pledges support to the existing system of internal control and oversight organizations, as well as the report and reply mechanism within the Secretariat.

Recalling Article 9 of A/RES/71/283, Latvia believes Enterprise Risk Management should be implemented more widely throughout the Organization, especially in peacekeeping operations where accountability and transparency are still insufficient. Latvia requests the Secretary-General to continue updating the implementation progress to the General Assembly in his reports. Considering the persistent gap in institutional and personal accountability, Latvia stresses the role of the existing internal oversight organizations, including the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the UN Ethics Office and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). Latvia believes timely implementation of these organizations' recommendations is an integral part of the Organization's accountability system. In addition, during the past few years, the Secretary-General's six progress reports have significantly pushed forward the establishment of an accountability system within the UN, thus Latvia upholds the suggestion given by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in A/71/820 to keep the frequency of the Secretary-General's reports annual, although the Secretary-General has proposed to issue them every two years. Furthermore, Latvia notices that although currently there is a report and reply mechanism within the UN, retaliation is still possible to take place, which urges stronger protection for the whistleblowers. Latvia calls upon internal and external oversight organizations to carry out assessments towards all reported cases related to UN staff, and objectively evaluate whether retaliation takes place in the Organization.

In conclusion, Latvia calls for cooperation between the Member States, all UN organs as well as non-governmental organizations to strengthen accountability and transparency within the UN, for the purpose of enhancing the reputation of the UN worldwide and ensuring that the Organization can live up to its great potential.

**II. Strengthening Compliance and Accountability in Field Missions with Special Regard to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Cases**

According to *Update on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions* issued by the Department of Field Support (DFS), the total number of allegations recorded in all peacekeeping of special political missions in 2016 was 44, while the actual situation could be much more severe. Latvia regards Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) as a huge violation to the credibility of the UN, and urges the UN take comprehensive and vigorous actions to regain trust.

Seeing the importance of training personnel in the rules of conduct among field missions, Latvia appreciates the great efforts by the DFS and the Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU). Latvia also acknowledges the progress made by other organizations, including UNICEF who established a mandatory online training module for all staff working in the UN. Concerned about providing appropriate support to the victims of SEA, Latvia highly recommends a victim-centered strategy, as defined in A/71/818, and stresses A/RES/62/414 aiming at offering coordinated assistance ranging from food, clothing, medical health care and legal assistance. As pointed out in A/RES/70/286, Latvia fully supports the establishment of the Trust Fund promoted by the Secretary-General and

agrees that payments should be taken and redistributed to the Trust Fund if severe allegations of SEA against personnel deployed in field missions occur. We also value all the achievements made by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with regard to SEA, such as the Code Blue Campaign by AIDS-Free World requesting proper investigations through independent reviews, the Human Rights Watch offering regular assessments of the performance of the UN, and the Peace Women providing victims with assistance as well as collecting data on the root causes.

On the other hand, Latvia agrees with A/59/710 that there still exists certain unawareness about this issue within the UN system and insufficiency in coherent and coordinated procedures for handling SEA. Latvia recognizes the framework of regulations, rules and administrative issuances developed in *Policy - Accountability for Conduct and Discipline in Field Missions*, yet notices that the current framework is only applicable to UN staff members, while military personnel usually fall under the jurisdiction of their own governments. Hence, Latvia urges the betterment of mechanisms in place for the imposition of stricter and more comprehensive disciplinary measures. In addition, Latvia sees the appointment of a system-wide Victims' Rights Advocate (VRA) at UN quarters as a step forward to optimize the report system of SEA cases. Latvia understands the necessity of adding budget to solve SEA problems in Field Missions. However, consideration of the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of all measures taken by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General should not be ignored.

Latvia expects collaborative operations among the Member States, UN departments and relevant organizations to strengthen the accountability of UN staff in field missions, protecting victims with proper care, and improving monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

### **III. Consideration of the Secretary-General's Reform Proposals**

Bureaucracy, the presence of which is nearly inevitable throughout the development of an organization as huge as the United Nations, will gradually undermine the UN and prevent it from living up to its own potential. "Fragmented structures. Byzantine procedures. Endless red tape," said by the Secretary-General António Guterres, are reducing the efficiency of the UN and hindering it from fulfilling its missions. In addition, with the world developing faster than ever before, the UN is now faced with more evolving challenges day by day. That's why the Secretary-General António Guterres, along with his predecessors, have long been dedicated to the reform of the UN to strengthen the Organization and better serve the people all around the world.

Paying attention to the Secretary-General's annual report on the Work of the Organization (A/72/1), Latvia firmly believes that the specific subtopics of UN reform issued in the report are possible breakthroughs in improving the organization's efficiency, reliability and accountability, thus should be listed as the focuses of the Organization in the near future. Latvia is in total support of the Secretary-General's proposal in his report on *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all* (A/72/124), believing that the eight reform guiding ideas issued in the report should be preserved and followed by all organs of the UN to further push forward that reform. Latvia believes the underlying decentralization theme of these guiding ideas will be a possible solution to the bureaucracy problem. Latvia endorses the establishment of the Internal Review Team (IRT) as well as the Internal Review Team on Management Reform (IRT-M), respectively focusing on the reform of the peace-security architecture of the Secretariat and the UN's internal management structure. However, noticing the increasing complexity faced by the UN and the great workload for it in the reform process, Latvia suggests the Secretariat establish new special working groups like IRT and IRT-M in charge of specific reform branches. Latvia recommends the special working groups be made up of personnel from all organs of the Organization with proper geographical distribution and gender representation, for the purpose of finding more potential reform proposals, balancing the interest of Member States and consistently pushing forward the whole reform process. Noticing that there are a number of CSOs which have been focusing on UN reform and have made great contributions to the process, including the International Police Institute (IPI) and the Center for UN Reform Education (CURE), Latvia suggests the UN should work closely with those CSOs to better promote the reform.