

General Assembly
Sixtieth Session
Informal Plenary Meeting

Report of the Secretary General

“Mandating and delivering: analysis and
recommendations to facilitate
the review of mandates”

Statement on behalf of the European Union

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New York, 7 April 2006

(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area as well as Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Secretary General for his valuable report on Mandate Review. Our special thanks also go to ASG Orr and his team who worked tirelessly to prepare the report and the Registry of Mandates. The report follows up on the mandate approved by our Heads of State and Government at the last World Summit, echoing the Secretary General's suggestion in his report "In Larger Freedom".

For the EU, Mandate Review is an essential piece in the set of reforms adopted at the Summit. It is a necessary stock-taking to strengthen the organisation for the benefit of all member states. Mandate Review pursues a goal truly common to all member states: the necessity to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. It enables us to take a critical look at the functions the organisation is performing today, as it becomes ever more operational in its focus. The EU shares the goal of identifying and consolidating obsolete, redundant or unnecessarily duplicative mandates. A successful Mandate Review will have a decisive positive impact on our organisation.

For the EU, it is clear that Mandate Review should not be perceived as a cost-cutting exercise. It is intended as a tool to enable the UN to use its resources more effectively in the interest of all member states and must be respectful of the balance between the main goals of the UN. All member states should take this opportunity to make better use of the UN's potential.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to see that the report presented by the Secretary General sums up the challenges ahead in a pragmatic way, thereby greatly facilitating a process, in which Member States gain full awareness of the manifold tasks the UN is performing upon their request. We commend the Secretariat for creating the useful Registry of Mandates and thank it for the assistance promised. The first technical presentation by Mr. Marc de Bourcy last week was well received. EU member states have started consulting the Registry, a habit which they will certainly retain as work progresses on the review. We encourage the Secretariat to enhance it both technically and linguistically so that every delegation can make best use of it.

Further cooperation and support of the Secretariat will be essential to carry out successfully the review process. In particular, we would encourage the Secretary General to inform member states about measures serving the goals of Mandate Review that could be taken under his authority. For instance, we welcome the Secretary General's suggestion that the Secretariat perform a "mandate impact assessment" for member states' information before new mandates are adopted.

We share the Secretary General's assessment that reporting requirements particularly deserve our scrutiny and reflection towards lifting unnecessary burdens placed on the Secretariat. We would therefore welcome further elaboration on the suggestion to provide the membership with "a set of core policy reports on each of the Organization's priority areas".

Mr. President,

As far as the process for Mandate Review is concerned, the EU is satisfied to note that this report will be treated in the same manner as the other follow-up reports of the World Summit 2005, namely in the framework of informal plenary meetings assisted by two Co-Chairs appointed by PGA Eliasson. We assure Amb. Akram and Amb. Rock of our full cooperation.

We understand that Mandate Review will require a sustained process as well as continuous work over several months. Momentum needed in the process would certainly benefit from agreement on a time-frame that defines objectives for the short term as well as the medium and long term. As the Secretary General points out in his report, the first phase could be dedicated to examining "those issues for which problems are clearly identifiable and decisions can be made in the short term". The EU welcomes that suggestion.

The European Union supports approaching the numerous mandates through thematic clusters, which are inspired by the GA's programme of work. This will facilitate a constructive approach of the exercise, in view of strengthening and updating the mandates in each of the main fields of the UN. To ensure that Mandate Review covers in a meaningful way the tasks the organisation is effectively performing, we believe that all currently active mandates which originated more than five years before the Summit, whether reaffirmed or not, should be covered by this effort. In the course of the review, additional information from the Secretariat on costs and outputs of mandates or their status of implementation could be valuable for our discussions.

The EU understands that the review of some mandates may raise particular political sensitivities. We believe those mandates should be approached carefully, in order to avoid overburdening and possibly jeopardising the review process. Since this review forms part of a wider strategy seeking management reform, we should take care not to let political considerations distract us unduly from our key objectives.

Mr. President,

It would be premature to discuss the substance of this report any further today. We will need to further study the Secretary General's suggestions and are looking forward to proposals by the Co-Chairs.

I would like to reiterate the EU's commitment to take part in these negotiations in good faith. Our common goal is a United Nations that delivers better and not less. We expect work on Mandate Review to be inclusive and transparent, and to proceed in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. We will do our part to achieve a successful outcome, which will bring us closer to a United Nations that meets effectively the needs of our peoples.