



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Toshiro Ozawa,
Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations
At the Informal Consultations of the Plenary of the UN General Assembly
on Mandate Review

7 April 2006

Mr. Co-Chair,

Thank you for convening this informal consultation. We feel that the two Co-Chairs' wisdom and foresight will be even more in demand as you guide us through our exercise to achieve positive results. In this regard, you can be assured of my delegation's constructive engagement and full cooperation.

We also thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, especially Mr. Robert Orr, for providing us the long-awaited report on Mandate Review together with the electronic database "mandate registry."

Mr. Co-Chair,

Japan regards mandate review as an opportunity to demonstrate to the people of the world that the United Nations is serious about reform, and that the UN does have the ability to adopt and change in order to better serve today's world. Last year, at the World Summit, our leaders clearly indicated their collective resolve to strengthen and update the programme of work of the United Nations so that it will better respond to the contemporary requirements of Member States. During our previous discussion, my delegation has made a number of observations, some of which we wish to reiterate.

- The primary purpose of mandate review is not cost-cutting per se nor the elimination of activities. The more important purpose should be the reallocation of resources from lower to higher priority areas and achieving enhanced cost-effectiveness.
- Some tangible results which entail programmatic-shifts should be achieved in the short-term.
- The issue of duplication and overlaps must be addressed.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Japan is now carefully examining the SG report, so that today, our comments are more of a preliminary nature.

Japan supports the proposal made by the Secretary-General to divide our exercise into two phases, one short term and the other longer term. It may be useful to include another intermediate phase, perhaps leading to the end of this year. We hope to discuss such timelines in future.

The SG report has truly impressed my delegation about the problems created by the uncoordinated and burdensome reporting requirements mandated by the Member States. We assume that many delegations would be agreeable to the streamlining, consolidation and reduction of the frequency of the reporting requirements. Such a reform would indeed free time and resources for both Member States and the Secretariat. It is incumbent on us the Member States to respond to the Secretariat's call to reduce the duplicative reporting requirement burden. We therefore request the Secretariat to provide us with concrete proposals that we the Member States can easily fashion into a draft resolution or resolutions for immediate action.

We also note with interest the proposal that the Secretary-General should be able to determine which entity or department is most competent to become the lead actor for implementing a mandate. We will examine this proposal seriously.

We find the SG report to be rather sparse in analysis of possible programmatic-shifts. In our future consultations, we may request the Secretariat to provide us more information in these areas.

Regarding the explicit references, suggestions and proposals by the SG on possible reforms of an institutional nature, my delegation will study them carefully. We think that a careful and comprehensive study on the overlap of the reporting mandates may also shed light on overlapping mandates of the subsidiary bodies, commissions and other entities. In this regard, the elaborate electric mandate inventory would be useful in promoting this exercise.

My delegation intends to conduct such studies and come up with specific proposals. We hope that other Member States will do the same. We request the Co-Chairs to be amenable to such an approach and provide us with further opportunities to present proposals and to discuss them.

On methodology, we should perhaps initially concentrate on areas where we can achieve tangible results. Needless to say, we acknowledge that our mandate review exercise is in essence an ongoing effort with a long-term perspective. As such, we suggest to the Co-Chairs to look into best means of identifying an appropriate framework for conducting such an exercise in a systematic manner.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Japan believes that this mandate review process will be beneficial for all Member States as long as we share the goal to make the United Nations a more effective and efficient organization, and work together to achieve that goal.

Thank you.