

***Delegation from  
Barbados***

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

The topics before the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Fifth Committee (GA5) 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. Barbados looks forward to working multilaterally with Member States in addressing these issues at the upcoming conference.

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

As the largest intergovernmental organization, the United Nations (UN) has always been facing the challenge of maintaining a system that is able to keep changing and evolving in order to meet the growing needs and demands of the Organization. The Charter of the UN assigns the Secretary-General to be in charge of overseeing all processes and mandates of the principal organs. However, an efficient implementation cannot be fully assured by the Secretary-General as the ultimate accountability mechanism is indispensable without the commitment of each Member State, who are obliged to work together to improve accountability and ensure transparency within the UN system, referring to resolution A/64/640.

Barbados supports all oversight bodies that have been successfully established by the UN: External mechanisms to promote accountability are provided by the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN System (JIU) created under General Assembly (GA) resolution 31/192 in 1976, while the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) as well as the UN Ethics office established by the GA under resolution 60/248 in 2006 assist in evaluating and strengthening the structure from within. Accountability has been announced an obligation by the Secretary-General in the report A/64/640 of 2010 and an official definition of the term has been agreed on. This report is in response to GA resolution 63/276, in which the Secretary-General is requested to address the significance of working towards a better accountability structure. Furthermore, the Secretary-General stresses the important role of oversight bodies as they uphold key principles of compliance and integrity, thus preventing mismanagement by external assessment.

In order to encourage and enforce individuals as well as organizations to strengthen accountability, Barbados considers internal management a central pillar in the strategic framework. Barbados also believes that providing fair and independent reports is an essential measure to achieve a higher level of accountability and transparency, as that is embodied by the Mission Statement of the Barbados Audit Office. Therefore, Barbados strongly urges Member States to prioritize the documentation of all processes and efforts to ensure the efficient implementation of mandates. Barbados supports the cooperation between all internal as well as external mechanisms that provide the vital foundation of a transparent system. Barbados recognizes the significant question of fortifying the UN system and its internal framework. Finally, we are confident that increased efforts will further improve accountability and transparency.

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

Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA) by UN military and civil staff as well as individual contractors employed by the UN have been issues threatening the integrity of the UN since the early 2000s. These atrocities have also happened during UN field missions in Haiti. Due to Barbados' affiliation with Haiti in the CARICOM and the general concern about these developments, Barbados encourages Member States to face these challenges in order

to restore general trust in the organizational structures within the UN system by working towards a higher level of prevention of SEA, and thus promoting the indispensable protection of basic human rights.

The UN has improved its mechanisms of dealing with SEA over the past years. Stated in the GA resolutions 57/306 (2003) and 70/286 (2016), the GA appeals to the Secretary-General to improve overview mechanisms of investigations and data collection on SEA cases. The GA's resolution 62/214 (2008) stresses the need for providing assistance and aid for victims. Although progress has been made, rising case numbers imply the necessity of immediate and further action. Barbados therefore strongly condemns all acts associated with SEA, and appeals to fellow Member States to reaffirm their support of the GA's commitment of implementing a comprehensive strategy to eliminate any SEA on field missions.

Barbados considers the great number of unknown and unreported cases as one of the greatest challenges when dealing with SEA, because it endangers an adequate evaluation and analysis of the problem's magnitude. Even though the Secretary-General was able to provide data about reported SEA cases in his report A/71/818 (2017), the actual numbers of unreported cases might be extraordinarily higher causing unawareness of problematic consequences that victims have to deal with. As they do not report their mistreatment, these victims are wrongly excluded from receiving desperately needed assistance and support as implicated by GA resolution 62/214 (2008). Solving this problem is essential to implement effective countermeasures against the rising problem of SEA. Barbados proposes a civil programme educating the local populace about their personal and legal rights to accompany all UN field missions. This civil programme could provide assistance preemptively as well as raise awareness empowering victims to actively claim their rights in order to confront perpetrators with an increased likelihood of consequences and adequate sanctions. Barbados believes successfully established development networks and entities such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or UN Women would be eligible to take executive charge in the suggested programme.

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

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has presented his reform proposals in his report A/72/492 (2017), putting emphasis on simplifying and improving the UN leadership and management structure as well as the budgetary cycle and thus strengthening accountability and performance of the UN system. Over the last 20 years there have been substantial improvements in the UN management structure, significantly strengthening UN integrity and efficiency. These improvements could constitute an outline to implementing current reform proposals of making the internal and external structure of the UN slimmer, more transparent and thus increasing accountability.

Under former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali a process of slimming down the staff of the Secretariat by making management and leadership structures more efficient has enabled a reduction of Secretariat employees. Reforms initiated by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 1997 under his *Renewing the United Nations* plan have established the *Senior Management Group* as a capable and clear leadership institution. Measures undertaken according to the Brahimi report in 2000 modernized the UN peacekeeping operations. Additionally, the rearrangement of financial commitment of Member States in the same year has enabled the UN to settle budgetary debates and progress independent of former financial uncertainty. Finally, the inauguration of the Human Rights Council in 2006 has significantly improved the UN's capabilities in protecting human rights around the globe.

Although the UN have yet to show their ability to implement a substantial institutional reform by amending the UN Charter, Barbados is convinced of the importance of constant improvement and modernization of the UN structures and has confidence in their ability to reform and adapt even further. Since Barbados sees the successes of former reforms, it expresses its support for the current Secretary-General's reform proposals and calls to all Member States to carefully consider their advantages and keep up the UN's tradition of constant reform progress and improvement.