

THE UN MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY CRISIS IN PERSPECTIVE

The IO Watch Charter (see the home page of this website) states that the first of the goals that it pursues is:

" - To become a repository (an institutional memory) for reports of incompetence and mismanagement within the UN so that every time a story or report appears about such subjects in the media, it is not written as if it was the first such story on the subject (and so that such reports are followed up and acted upon, rather than merely being sensationalized for a short time)."

Once again, the UN Secretariat leadership is forging ahead with assertions of good intentions and hustle and bustle to establish management accountability in the UN. But this is only the latest of a seemingly endless set of management reform attempts within the UN over the past six decades, which later only expire ignominiously. The preceding subsection on the 1993 Management Accountability Attempt and the subsections here on the UN "old boys" games provide many details on this situation, as does indeed the entire archive.

It is essential to recall that Mr. Annan is not a "new broom", but a leader who has spent more than eight years as Secretary-General of the United Nations. The following brief overview of the 1997-2004 period gives the highlights (admirable Secretariat intent and much hustle and bustle) and the lowlights (countervailing warnings from experts, analysts and UN staff) of the non-implementation of UN management accountability. IO Watch believes that Mr. Annan must be held firmly accountable for this failure, rather than accepting without skepticism his earnest attempt to try "one more time" in the less-than-two years remaining of his second term.

" ... The selection of a career staff member for the position of Secretary-General carries with it a recognition of all of you, the staff of the Organization. For we are above all a team. ...

Real reform requires an ongoing search for excellence ... above all, in the performance of our staff. In this **I will not compromise. I expect from each and every staff member, at all levels, a total commitment to excellence.** I expect the Secretariat to work together and at all times to function properly. ...

I pledge to you today that we will develop a new management culture in the

Organization. Our senior managers across the world must understand their *obligation* to properly manage the staff -- the human resources -- entrusted to their care. **It is my intention to hold my managers accountable** for providing the full range of career support to their staff in their day-to-day work. ...

... We are the United Nations, and we believe our organization can fulfil the vision of our Charter ... **The excellence of our performance will turn our detractors into supporters. We all know [that] ... nobody argues with success.**"

"Secretary-General urges staff to strive for excellence, stressing UN performance will turn detractors into supporters", SG/SM/6140 of **9 January 1997**, pp. 1,3, 4. [emphasis added]

"The General Assembly ...

1.2. **Regrets with deep concern that further progress in the implementation of the adopted [human resources] strategy has not been achieved,** and urges the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to ensure its full implementation ...;

3. **Regrets the unsuccessful efforts to develop a management environment and culture** in the Organization that enables staff members to contribute their maximum potential, effectiveness, and efficiency; ...

11. **Reaffirm[s] its resolution 48/218A of 23 December 1993, in particular** the request therein **for a mechanism ensuring that programme managers are accountable** for the effective management of human resources allocated to them, ...

2. **Requests the Secretary-General to** enhance managerial accountability with respect to human resources management decisions, including **imposing sanctions in cases of demonstrated mismanagement of staff and willful neglect of or disregard for established rules and procedures,** while safeguarding the due process rights of all staff members, including managers; ...

4. **Deplores the high number of exceptions to the established procedures for the recruitment, placement, and promotion of staff, in particular in the Office of Human Resources Management;**"

"Human resources management", General Assembly resolution 51/226 of **25 April 1997**, Part I, paras. 2-3, Part II, paras.2 and 4. [emphasis added]

"The General Assembly ...

Expressing deep concern about the persistence of problems and defects observed by the Board of Auditors in the financial administration and management of the United Nations;

...

11. **Notes with deep concern the incidents of fraud and presumed fraud reported by the Board of Auditors;**

12. **Requests the Secretary-General and the executive heads ... to take the disciplinary actions necessary in cases of proven fraud and to enhance the individual accountability of United Nations personnel, including through stronger managerial control;** ..."

"Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors," General Assembly resolution 51/225 of **16 May 1997**. [emphasis added]

"I am pleased to submit ... what I believe to be the most extensive and far-reaching reforms in the fifty-two year history of the Organization. ...

... the Organization needs to be significantly reconfigured to do better ... also so realize significant administrative efficiencies. ...

The report seeks ... on my own initiative, nothing less than to transform the leadership and management structure of the Organization. ...

... it also includes complementary measures that reside within the jurisdiction of Member States ... and several more fundamental proposals ... for possible action in the longer term."

"Renewing the United Nations: A programme for reform: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/51/950 of **14 July 1997**, Letter of transmittal. [emphasis added]

"UN employees -- who request anonymity because they fear they will suffer more professional harm than the corrupt officials they want to expose -- have provided numerous accounts of officials' being transferred rather than dismissed after being caught breaking the rules.

This happens frequently in cases of sexual harassment, nepotism, and occasionally violence, according to these accounts. Whistle-blowers are neither encouraged nor rewarded."

Barbara Crossette, "In war on corruption and waste, UN confronts well-entrenched foe", International Herald Tribune, **3 November 1997**.

" ... staff dream of an Organization where decisions are taken according to clear rules and guidelines. The real situation is far different. ...

We continue to hear about the need for accountability along with stories of physical and verbal abuse against staff members by senior officials which remain unaddressed. A steady flow of appellants in the internal justice system attests to the faulty managerial decision-making which continues unabated."

"Standing up for our rights," UN Staff Report (New York), **December 1997**, p. 2. [emphasis added.]

"OHRM will convene ... a task force of experts [to make a] 'clear delineation of responsibilities' [which] is expected to lead to a reduction in micro-management.

Micromanagement by intergovernmental bodies is an index of the lack of trust between the majority of delegations and the UN Secretariat. ... [If this trend is to be reversed] there must be a much clearer conceptualization of change, a balanced explanation of implications, and an absolute sincerity of purpose. **The current perception of the Secretariat among many delegations is that in terms of personnel policy it is confused, does not understand the full implications of what is proposed, and has a hidden agenda.** ...

In pushing for reorientation, Ms. Salim [the head of OHRM] speaks some home truths... 'We can no longer assume that a [20-year] staff member has developed the necessary managerial and supervisory skills' ... **there is 'widespread staff distrust of management'** and the UN's 'organizational culture is one in which advancement is generally expected on the basis of longevity rather than performance.'"

"UN personnel chief reviewing all aspects of management in bid to simplify controls, delegate authority," International Documents Review, **16 February 1998**, p. 2. [emphasis added.]

"In a rather scathing [1998] report, the General Assembly's Advisory Committee

on Administrative and Financial Questions (ACABQ) has dismissed the 'concept paper' ... submitted by the Secretariat on 'Reducing and refocusing of non-programme costs.' ...

Rather than call for yet another report, *the ACABQ suggests* that a practical move at this stage might be to 'set aside a preoccupation with concept and theory ... to concentrate on ... specific new measures to increase the efficiency and confirm the results arising out of the implementation of new measures as well as those initiated prior to the current exercise.'

"Advisory Committee rejects "non-programme costs" report", International Documents Review, 16 March 1998, page 5. [emphasis added]

"The job of secretary-general at the United Nations is not unlike that of a medieval pope ...

Much depends on character and momentum. Kofi Annan has shown that he has plenty of the former. ...

Until recently [he] also seemed to have momentum on his side. But his successful diplomatic crusade in Iraq ... [is] unraveling ... the UN's monitors have been hustled out of Congo ... the hard-won peace in Angola is at vanishing point ... [and] the ... [UNHCR] faces unexpected allegations of corruption. ...

Sooner or later ... the UN will have to change ... into the 'narrower and deeper' organization reformers have always wished it would be.

Mr. Annan is nervous about the idea of a much narrower UN ...

[Yet] If he wants to change the UN, the diplomatic Mr. Annan will have to try to force his club members to accept changes that most of them do not want.

... The failure by most popes to face up to the abuses within their own organizations opened up the way to reformation of a more devastating type. Or as one insider puts it: "If the UN's friends do not reform it, its enemies will."

"Reforming the United Nations: Pope Kofi's unruly flock", The Economist, August 8th, 1998, pp. 17-19.

"... The new management culture has shown significant improvements over the reporting period;

Far-reaching initiatives are under way to introduce increased delegation of authority and accountability, but in this regard a lot more needs to be done. ... Better guidance, precise instructions, and more management training must be provided. Equally crucial but infinitely more complex will be the efforts to instil a sense of accountability among staff members."

"Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the OIOS", UN document A/53/428 of 23 September 1998, "Preface", 3d and 4th paras.

[Note: The comment is from the first head of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Mr. Karl Paschke, in his 1998 annual report.]

"Accountability for the use of all resources put at one's disposal is integral to an organizational culture of empowerment. Staff members at all levels ... must be held accountable for delivering assigned outputs on a timely and cost-effective basis ... and for upholding the values and principles of the organization. ...

The prime responsibility for taking action to remedy accidental and intentional performance failures will lie with supervisors and managers at all levels. ...

Staff Administration: Vision

An organization which manages its human resources ... by **delegating, to the maximum extent possible, the authority, responsibility and accountability for the**

the day-to-day management of human resources to the line managers. ...

... line managers will be delegated authority **to implement human resources policies on behalf of the Secretary-General. ...** "

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/53/414 of **13 October 1998**, paras. 6, 7, 25, 29.

"We are too complicated and too slow. **We** are over-administered ... and **have too many rules and too many regulations'** **[Mr. Annan] told staff on 29 October. [He called] for ... simpler procedures and more authority for managers ...**

Managers have limited responsibility over their human and financial resources. This leads directly to the erosion of accountability at all levels of the Organization ..."

"Staff become focus of United Nations modernization: New management culture key to revitalization," United Nations Focus Series, No. 4, **November 1998**, pp. 2-3. [emphasis added]

"The General Assembly ...

IV Delegation of authority and accountability ...

3. ... notes that **no comprehensive system of accountability and responsibility has been established;**

10. **Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General** ... [in resolution 51/226 of 25 April 1997] **to enhance managerial accountability** with respect to human resources management decisions, **including imposing sanctions in cases of demonstrated mismanagement** of staff and willful neglect of or disregard for established roles and procedures, while safeguarding the right of due process of all staff members, including managers."

"Human resources management," General Assembly resolution 53/221 of **23 April 1999**, paras. IV. 3, 10. [emphasis added.]

"The United Nations of today ... is a better Organization in many respects than, say, five years ago, and enhanced oversight has played its part in that change.

However, further improvement ... is still necessary in many ways. Internal controls are not strong enough yet; **accountability continues to be blurred and misunderstood;** delegation of authority must be effectively executed; and human resources management is in need of further reform ..."

"Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the OIOS", UN document A/54/393, of **23 September 1999**, 3d from last para. [emphasis added.]

[Note: The comment is from the first OIOS head, Mr. Karl Paschke in his final annual report in 1999.]

"In recent years, the United Nations has had fundamental problems. In 1994 ... there was an overall failure of its human resources system to staff critical posts with the right people. ...

The United Nations has substantially restructured its leadership and operations and **partly implemented** a merit-based and performance-oriented human capital system ... **However, ... the overall objectives of the reform have not yet been achieved.** Specifically, the United Nations has not yet implemented reforms to focus its programming and budgeting on managing the Secretariat's performance. **These initiatives would enable Member States to hold the Secretariat accountable for results**

and are key to the success of the overall reform because they institutionalize a shift in the organization's focus from carrying out activities to accomplishing missions. ... **the U.N. reform is an interrelated process and requires that all core elements be in place to succeed.**"

"US General Accounting Office, "United Nations: Reforms are progressing, but overall objectives have not been achieved", GAO/NSIAD-00-169, 15 pages, of **May 10, 2000**, especially summary and pp. 2-3 and 9-15, and "United Nations: Reform initiatives have strengthened operations, but overall objectives have not been achieved", GAO/NSIAD-00-150, **May 10, 2000**, 84 pages. [emphasis added]

"The present report ... outlines changes in the policy and management culture of the Organization which will allow for the effective implementation of the comprehensive system of accountability now established. ...

In conclusion, **the Secretary-General is confident that the comprehensive system of accountability now in place ensures that accountability mechanisms are effectively used, are seen to be used, and ensure that staff at all levels are held accountable for their actions and inaction.**"

"Accountability and responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General", A/55/270 of **3 August 2000**, Summary, paras. 1-2, 47-48. [emphasis added.]

"While there is currently a comprehensive system of [internal] justice in place, its highly formalized nature leads to protracted and lengthy proceedings that are in the interest of neither justice nor of the staff or management. At present, the decision makers whose administrative decisions are questioned are very rarely directly involved in defending the cases. This has resulted in the perception that the system shields managers from being held accountable for their decisions."

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/55/253 of **1 August 2000**, para. 51. [emphasis added.]
[Note: the report did not bother to attempt to rebut this perception.]

"The jurisdictional immunity of the Organization legally obligates it to have just and effective internal processes to deal with grievances and appeals by staff, and with disciplinary cases. **A just and effective system is also an indispensable aid to maintaining staff morale, as well as enforcing accountability.**"

"Accountability and responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General, UN document A/55/270 of **3 August 2000**, para. 39.

"Challenges to implementation

... No amount of money or resources can substitute for the significant changes that are urgently needed in the culture of the [United Nations].

... People everywhere are fully entitled to consider that [the United Nations] is *their* organization, and as such to pass judgement on its activities and the people who serve in it.

Furthermore, wide disparities in staff quality exist and those in the system are the first to acknowledge it; better performers are given unreasonable workloads to compensate for those who are less capable. **Unless the United Nations takes steps to become a true meritocracy, it will not be able to reverse the alarming trend of**

qualified personnel, the young among them in particular, **leaving the Organization**. Moreover, qualified people will have no incentive to join it. **Unless managers at all levels, beginning with the Secretary-General and his senior staff, seriously address this problem on a priority basis, reward excellence and remove incompetence, additional resources will be wasted and lasting reform will become impossible.**"

Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations [the "Brahimi report"], UN document A/55/305 -- S/2000/809 of August 21 2000, p. xiv. [emphasis added]

[Note: The full document is available at <http://www.un.org/documents/> under the A document number. Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi has most recently served as the UN Secretary-General's special envoy in Afghanistan and in Iraq.]

"The United Nations has been hit by an unprecedented wave of fraud, waste and corruption. Officials at its antifraud investigation unit say they are expecting to have to run more than 350 inquiries by the end of the year -- nearly twice the total for 1998 ...

The revelations will embarrass Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, who is to welcome national leaders ... to the 'Millenium Summit' in New York next week. ... Annan is hoping to convince skeptical heads of state that the UN has provided value for money and that its role should be expanded. ...

One senior investigator said last week that the UN investigations unit's workload was greater than ever. **'We are seeing more and more frauds and abuses of authority.'** ... "

Jason Burke, et. al., "UN rocked by flood of fraud cases: Officials were 'addicted to luxury", The Observer International (UK), **September 3, 2000**.

[Note: any press such interviews with OIOS staff seem to have come to an abrupt end after this article appeared, as discussed in the section on [Internal Oversight: The OIOS](#) which follows.]

"How do you ensure that DPI isn't seen as a propaganda tool, yet that it serves the UN's objectives?

By telling the truth! Information isn't propaganda unless you doctor it to distort reality or hide inconvenient facts. We don't do that.

I think you'll admit that **under Secretary General Kofi Annan we have the most transparent United Nations imaginable ...**"

Pranay Gupte, "Q & A: Shashi Tharoor: 'Why information matters at the UN'," Earth Times, **May 2001**, p. 16.

"The General Assembly ...

VII Delegation of authority and accountability ...

2 **Emphasizes that the administrative and managerial discretionary powers of the Secretary-General should be in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter ... and mandates given by the General Assembly; ...**

4. **Emphasizes that any delegation of authority should be in accordance with the Charter and the regulations and rules ...; ...**

7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to improve accountability and responsibility ... as well as monitoring and control mechanisms ...; ...

8. ... to report ... [in 2002] on the progress achieved, including with regard to management irregularities; ...

10. Decides to further consider the issue of a robust monitoring capacity in the Office of Human Resources Management ... and [requests] an analytical and thorough report

thereon [in 2001]. "

"Human resources management," General Assembly resolution 55/258 of **27 June 2001**, "Section VII.

"[The General Assembly ...

XI. Administration of justice

8. Requests the Secretary-General to **establish a clear linkage between the administration of justice and the system of accountability** when the decisions of the Administrative Tribunal result in losses to the Organization due to management irregularities;

9. [and] ... **to take urgent measures ... to recover financial losses caused to the Organization by wrongful actions or gross negligence of senior officials** of the United Nations, particularly as a result of the judgments of the Administrative Tribunal ..."

"Human resources management," General Assembly resolution 55/258 of **27 June 2001**, section XI. [emphasis added.]

"An extraordinary thing is happening this week at the United Nations. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is to be re-elected virtually by acclamation. ...

Outside [the] UN few knew much about him. But in the early 90's he had become head of the UN peacekeeping department and came to the attention of the major powers, particularly in Bosnia....

Within the UN system his reforms have been important although limited by the perennial self-interest of the members. ... **The personnel system is still a disaster, which he must now tackle resolutely.** ..."

William Shawcross, "Another five years at the UN helm for Annan, of course," International Herald Tribune, **June 27, 2001**. [emphasis added]

"Kofi Annan's election to a second and last term should normally allow him to help establish the United Nations as the centerpiece of an emerging system of global management that is efficient, just and accepted as legitimate by all peoples and nations.

...

Decisive action should not continue to be postponed in regaining the motivation and professional quality of the United Nations in its earlier years ...

Also, **much would be achieved if UN programme managers were allowed to manage -- yes, manage -- their own budgets and personnel.** Not only would their motivation increase immediately, but they could be held accountable for failure to achieve agreed objectives."

Enrique ter Horst, "A re-elected Secretary-General can give the world the facts," International Herald Tribune, **6 July 2001**. [emphasis added]

[Note: Mr. ter Horst was a former UN Assistant-Secretary-General, who served under several UN Secretary-Generals, including Mr. Annan]

"The human resources programme ... pursued over the past four years is an integrated one, intended to build the Organization's human resources capacity and its ability to attract ... [the highest quality staff.] ...

Any major culture change requires time ... Evidence of cultural change is already, however, beginning to be seen in a number of ways ...

The next few years will see the consolidation and institutionalization of the

changes introduced to date ...

The Secretary-General will give due attention to the request by the General Assembly that he continue to improve accountability and responsibility in the reform of human resources management, as well as monitoring mechanisms."

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/57/293 of **8 August 2002**, paras. 6, 11, 12.

"One of my priorities in my first term was to improve the Organization's professional capacity and to promote a new culture of performance, accountability and trust. We have made significant strides ... I am confident that these measures will bear fruit in the years to come ...

I have put great emphasis on establishing clear lines of responsibility and ensuring that managers are held accountable ... **I am confident that [our] new system of recruitment, by giving managers primary responsibility for staff selection, will lead to a new level of accountability and empowerment.** ...

I intend to adopt additional measures to cut unnecessary layers of bureaucracy. **At present, the Organization recruits highly qualified individuals for management functions -- yet its procedures do not allow them to manage** a budget, procure what they need for everyday activities or authorize travel for their staff.

As decision-making authority is devolved to programme managers, the roles and responsibilities of the central service provider, the Department of Management ... will need to be reviewed. ...

Action 32. In order to continue efforts to improve management:

(a) **a thorough review will be conducted of delegated authority ... to increase the capacity and flexibility of managers to manage ...**"

"Strengthening of the United Nations: An agenda for further change: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/57/387 of **9 September 2002**, paras. 174, 188-190.

[Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in a statement to a global forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, in Seoul, Korea in May 2003] ... emphasized that ... 'The United Nations itself has launched an Organizational Integrity Initiative designed to promote professional ethics, improve accountability and better protect our resources and reputation. ...

After all, if United Nations agencies are advocating integrity and good governance, we ourselves have a duty to lead by example and practice what we preach."

"Global Forum III: Ongoing challenges, shared responsibilities", US Agency for International Development, Newsletter of the Americas' Accountability/Anti-Corruption Project (AAA), No. 33, p. 1.

"The General Assembly ...

II Human resources management reform

4. Requests the Secretary-General to ... report to the General Assembly [in 2004] in a comprehensive manner on the achievements of the human resources management reform, when sufficient information will be available on the experiences of the Secretariat with ... implementation ...;

5. ... conduct a study [by the OIOS] on the impact of ... [the reform] ...

6. ... **ensure that all future reports on the implementation of the ... reform focus on the results of such measures;**

10. ... **ensure the accountability of programme managers in the staff selection process**, in close collaboration with the [OHRM], and to report thereon [in 2004];"
"Human resources management," General Assembly resolution 57/305 of 1 May 2003, Section II.

"The General Assembly ...

4. ... regrets the serious delays in the appeals process, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure full cooperation and accountability in the internal system of justice of the manager whose decision has been challenged, at all stages of the process; ...

24. Reiterates ... its request to ... establish a clear linkage between the administration of justice and responsibility and accountability [in the UN Secretariat when decisions of the UNAT result in losses ... due to management irregularities] ...;

26. **Requests the Secretary-General to expeditiously finalize and issue an administrative instruction on the implementation** of Section XI, paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 55/258."

"Administration of justice in the Secretariat," General Assembly resolution 57/307 of 22 May 2003. [emphasis added.]

[Note: Section XI, para. 9 of Resolution 55/258 of June 2001, already cited above, had called upon the Secretary-General to "take urgent measures ... to recover financial losses caused to the Organization by wrongful actions or gross negligence of senior officials ... " Clearly, he had other things to do.]

"An independent panel [appointed by Secretary-General Annan and led by Martti Ahtisaari, a former president of Finland] said today that the UN's security systems were 'dysfunctional' ...

Mr. Ahtisaari said, 'Everybody bears responsibility, the Member States, who are asking the UN ... [to act] and of course the Secretary-General himself -- the buck stops always with the Secretary-General.' ...

The panel labelled as a major deficiency a 'lack of accountability for the decisions and positions taken by UN managers with regard to the security of UN staff.'

'The United Nations', it said, 'needs a new culture of accountability in security management.' ...

"Iraqi bombing panel finds UN security systems dysfunctional, in need of reform," UN News Service, 22 October 2003. [emphasis added]

[Note: Mr. Ahtisaari is also a former UN Under-Secretary-General for management and served the UN in the field as well.]

"The U.N. Secretary General launched two reform agendas, in 1997 and 2002, to address the U.N.'s core management challenges -- poor leadership of the Secretariat, duplication among its many offices and programs, and the lack of accountability for staff performance. ... In 2000, GAO reported that the reforms ... were not yet complete.

What GAO found

... First, the Secretariat has taken positive steps to strengthen its human capital management, but reforms in this area are ongoing and additional challenges remain. Second, the U.N. has begun to adopt results-oriented budgeting, but its monitoring and evaluation system does not measure program impact. ...

UN reform faces several challenges. For example, the Secretariat does not conduct comprehensive assessments of the status and impact of U.N. reforms. In addition, the reform agendas lack clearly stated priorities, interim goals, and target dates for overall completion. Other challenges include resistance to change from program

managers and possible resource constraints.

U.S. General Accounting Office, United Nations: Reforms progressing, but comprehensive assessments needed to measure impact, GAO 04-339, **February 2004**, "Highlights" page. [emphasis added]

[Note: the complete report is available at www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-339

"In 2002, the ... [OIOS] found that ... **[UN] program managers and department and office heads were not complying with U.N. regulations** ... and nearly half of programme managers were not regularly regularly monitoring and evaluating program performance. In addition, program managers were not held accountable for meeting program objectives because U.N. regulations prevent linking program effectiveness and impact with program managers' performance. **U.N. officials told us that a more mature program monitoring and evaluation system is needed before programme managers can be held responsible...**

The Secretary-General tasked the ... OIOS to develop a strategy to systematically evaluate and monitor programme results and to introduce information systems needed ... and [it] expects to have a complete system by 2006. ...

"According to [UN] ... officials, some program managers and staff have resisted implementing certain reform initiatives. ...

The Secretariat is providing training to all departments to assist managers ... in conducting self-monitoring and evaluation exercises to comply with performance-oriented budgeting **and overcome resistance. Managers' support is critical** for the institutionalization of reforms **in the long term.** ...

Given that the Secretary-General does not provide regular, comprehensive reports on the overall status and impact of reforms, **it is difficult to hold staff accountable for implementing these reforms** and their impact is unclear. In addition, the 2002 reform agenda did not specify ... goals or establish expected time frames ... Adopting key practices ... such as systematic monitoring and evaluation ... could facilitate the achievements of the Secretary-General's overall reform goals. As the U.N.'s largest financial contributor and a proponent of reform, the United States would also benefit from the adoption of these practices.

U.S. General Accounting Office, United Nations: Reforms progressing, but comprehensive assessments needed to measure impact, GAO 04-339, **February, 2004**, pp. 22-23, 35-36. The report is available at www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-339 .]

[Note: IO Watch finds all this to be accurate, long-entrenched, and truly amazing in the 21st century. Does not one care? At least the staff do -- see the next item.]

"A new survey of ... [UN staff perceptions of integrity has found that] while structures for reporting and combating corruption exist, most staff members are either unaware of how to use them or afraid to do so for fear of high-level retaliation.

'The UN has a 'phone book' of rules and regulations which are totally useless as they are never practiced', a staff member is quoted as saying ... [Another says,] 'Senior leaders caught in serious breaches of ethics should be punished, not promoted as usual.'

The new [study's] ... most negative findings have to do with ingrown leadership and the lack of response to reports of corruption.

'Get rid of the old boy network,' one staff member ... [says.] **'That network is wide, tenacious and powerful. ... So long as you can wind your way into that network, you are OK. ... Opposing the network is certainly the end of a UN career.'**

Warren Hoge, "Report criticizes the way UN fights corruption", International Herald Tribune, **June 16, 2004**. [Note: The actual survey is "United Nations organizational integrity survey", Final Report, prepared by Deloitte Consulting LLP, **June 2004**.]

"Dear Colleagues, ...

According to the [UN staff integrity] survey, **staff generally perceive that breaches of integrity and ethical conduct are insufficiently and inequitably addressed** by the disciplinary system. At the same time, **they voice concern about the consequences of 'whistle-blowing' or reporting on misconduct**, and uncertainly about the mechanisms for such reporting. ... We will ... develop measures to reinforce formal protection for whistle-blowers, while ensuring that they are not used to cloak false accusations. ...

... It is interesting to note that, while the great majority of staff believe that their own immediate supervisors demonstrate integrity and uphold the United Nations' values, **the general view of senior leaders is less positive**. *The survey rightly emphasizes the need for senior leaders to lead by example*, living up to the commitments they make in their annual compact with me. ... I will therefore be directing my senior colleagues to make much greater efforts in this area ..."

"Dear colleagues", letter from Secretary-General Annan to UN staff on the findings of the Integrity Survey, of **4 June 2004**, pp. 2-3. [emphasis added]

"The United Nation's anti-corruption department has been rocked by accusations that the office itself is corrupt.

The head of the [OIOS] ... , Dileep Nair, has been accused of promoting and recruiting people in ways that are not consistent with U. N. rules and regulations. Also, a senior investigator has been suspended ...

The scrutiny ... comes at a delicate time, as the UN is under intense scrutiny for alleged abuse of the Iraqi oil-for-food program. ...

Other allegations of impropriety include charges that some inside the OIOS received financial kickbacks in return for promoting people and that some people were promoted in exchange for sexual favors.

Nair, a former banker and civil servant from Singapore, was picked by Annan in 2000."

Jonathan Hunt, "Watching the UN's watchdog", Fox News, **June 16, 2004**.

"Fraud awareness, prevention plan and policy

... **The United Nations** has, to some extent, an established framework on this issue. However, in terms of implementation, it **did not have a comprehensive internal anti-fraud and anti-corruption infrastructure, and did not include anti-corruption and anti-fraud elements in the various rules, procedures and internal controls**, which means that such internal risks may not be properly addressed. ...

Owing to the lack of a comprehensive internal fraud plan, **a large number of United Nations system offices, funds and programmes have:**

- (a) **No** sufficient framework for prevention, detection, resolution, and reporting;
- (b) **No** decentralized corruption and fraud risk-assessment mechanisms and **no** corruption and fraud-prevention committee;
- (c) **No** appropriate resolution mechanisms for reported and detected incidents and allegations of corruption and fraud (although reliance is placed on the [OIOS] in this regard."

"Financial reports and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 2003 and Report of the Board of Auditors", Vol. I, UN document A/59/5 of **22 July 2004**, p. 12, item (u), paras. 15(s), 344-346, 349. [emphasis added]

[Note: The auditors recommended establishment of a comprehensive and well-communicated UN corruption and fraud prevention plan and process. However, the Administration airily responded that "some of the Board's comments may give the mistaken impression to the uninitiated reader that the potential for large-scale fraudulent and corrupted activities is widespread. ..." [emphasis added], see "First report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors ... for the financial period ended 31 December 2003: Report of the Secretary General", UN document A/59/318 of **1 September 2004**, paras. 124-126.]

"Rosemarie Waters, [the UN Staff Union President], said that ... **in the last six years, [UN] ... management had been reforming itself and increasing managerial authority, while reducing accountability.** The Staff Union [had great respect for the Secretary-General's vision and reform programme goals.] ... It could not support, however, **the erosion of staff rights and dissolution of oversight mechanisms** as a means of implementation, [or legitimize] ... actions in which staff, through their elected representatives, had no meaningful role to play. ...

The [integrity survey] ... revealed that staff ... feared reprisals for exposing breaches of ethics, and they perceived that the disciplinary process was applied unevenly. Their view of integrity among senior managers was less than positive..

The Organization had yet to establish concrete measures for individual accountability, she continued. It was essential that areas with expanded delegation of authority for personnel decisions should be carefully examined and, if abuses were found, such delegation should be revoked. ... **The [OHRM] had informed staff representatives of its inability to enforce accountability because they lacked central authority.** The Fifth Committee may wish to recommend that concrete individual accountability be developed, in consultation with staff representatives, on a priority basis."

"UN staff committee representatives tell budget committee concerns ignored in management reform report", Fifth Committee, Press Release GA/AB/3641 of **29 October 2004**, pp. 2-3. [emphasis added]

"James O. C. Jonah, ... [who worked at the UN for three decades] ... and served as head of personnel from 1979 through 1982, ... [said that] it was sad to see the erosion of the international civil service in the United Nations. That had serious implications. The Committee should also have a serious look at the results of the integrity study. **Never had the staff perception of integrity been so low.** ... In some respects, the reforms had weakened the Secretariat considerably.

When he served as head of personnel, his biggest fight had been with programme managers, who were most resistant to reform **He could not believe that such measures as giving authority to programme managers would strengthen the international civil service.** What had been said about the lack of authority of the OHRM was true. Without a strong personnel office, however, there would be no uniformity of rules and fairness in the system. **Governments should not take what was happening lightly.**"

"UN staff committee representatives tell budget committee concerns ignored in management reform report", Fifth Committee, Press Release GA/AB/3641 of **29 October 2004**, p. 4. [emphasis added]

"The General Assembly ...

"9. Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General and the executive heads ... to examine governance principles and to report thereon to the General Assembly, through the respective governing bodies [in 2006];

10. Requests the Secretary-General and the executive heads ... to **consider strengthening the internal control framework, harmonizing the oversight mechanisms that would systematically act on ... [oversight recommendations] and improving financial reporting,** ... and report thereon ... [in 2006];

"Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors", General Assembly resolution 59/264 of **23 December 2004**, paras. 6-11, [9-11.] [emphasis added]

"The General Assembly ...

Recalls its request to the Secretary-General of ... [1997, 1999, and 2003] to enhance managerial accountability with respect to human resources management decisions, **including imposing sanctions** in cases of demonstrated mismanagement of staff and willful neglect of, or disregard for, established rules and procedures, while safeguarding the right of due process of all staff members, including managers, and requests the Secretary-General to report comprehensively thereon at its sixty-first session."

"... all administrative issuances of the Secretary-General related to the implementation of its resolutions and decisions shall be in full compliance with such resolutions and shall be reported to the General Assembly in conformity with the established regulations, rules and practices."

"Human Resources Management", General Assembly resolution 59/266 of **23 December 2004**, Sections 1, especially paragraph 14, XVI and XVII.

"The General Assembly ...

"4. Affirms its primary role in the consideration of and action taken on the reports presented to it;

5. Notes that no mechanism has been established for the follow-up of [OIOS] recommendations, including those considered by the General Assembly;

6. **Emphasizes the importance of establishing real, effective and efficient mechanisms for responsibility and accountability;**

7. **Regrets that despite previous information provided by the Secretary-General on the establishment of accountability mechanisms, including the accountability panel, such mechanisms are not in place, thereby affecting the efficient and effective functioning of the Organization;"**

"Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218B and 54/244", General Assembly resolution 59/272 of 23 December 2004, paras. 4-7. [emphasis added]

Note: Discussion of this topic continues in the subsection on The UN management accountability crisis in perspective II.