

1993 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ATTEMPT

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Dissatisfaction with management performance

The 1993 management accountability resolution

Non-implementation of the resolution

The UN Secretariat has found, after some 60 years of experience, that coping with Member State demands for management reform is easy. When the General Assembly periodically calls for such reforms, the Secretariat states its earnest intentions, bustles for a few years with reform "activities", and issues some vague progress reports.

However, the Secretariat then relies on the distractions created by crowded General Assembly agendas, and the interest and expertise of Member State representatives in management issues, and lapses once again into inactivity. Eventually, Member States begin the process all over again. This pattern has been clearly reflected in the most important attempt ever made at establishing UN management accountability, as discussed in the three subsections below.

As a wise observer of the UN system stated far back in 1973, and as still seems true three decades later:

"concern with capacity and performance [in the United Nations system] reaches its highest peak when draft programmes and budgets are discussed and seems to evaporate when reports on the execution of the approved programmes are reviewed. ... This dichotomy [between budgetary concentration and performance neglect] is in itself one of the major causes of the shortfalls of the performance of the system."

Mahdi Elmandjra, The United Nations System: An Analysis, Faber and Faber, London, 1973, pp. 228-229.

The following abbreviations of major UN organizations and entities appear throughout this archive:

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ACC	Advisory Committee on Coordination (heads of UN system agencies, recently retitled "Chief Executives Board for Coordination")
Board of Auditors	of the United Nations
CPC	Committee for Programme & Coordination
DAM	Department of Administration and Management (recently retitled the Department of Management, DM)
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peace-keeping Operations
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
Fifth Committee	(Administrative and Budgetary) of the General Assembly
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WFP	World Food Programme

Useful Sources

(Note: informally assembled by IO Watch, roughly ranked from "most useful" on down, and subject to change as new sources are added)

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