

ITEM 137:
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman

The topic under consideration today is of much greater importance than its somewhat bureaucratic title suggests. Reforming the “Administration of justice” at the United Nations is not a merely technical exercise, but a core element of our comprehensive efforts aimed at equipping this organization with the tools it needs to confront its ever increasing challenges. Liechtenstein is fully committed to this process and commends the General Assembly’s principled decision to establish a new, independent, transparent, professionalized, adequately resourced and decentralized system of administration of justice. Such reform has been long overdue, and is a necessary prerequisite to ensure the fair and just treatment of United Nations staff, to improve staff morale, to enhance accountability, and by extension to improve the overall performance of this organization.

We further welcome the decision to implement the new system by January 2009, and are committed to keeping this ambitious time-line. The Secretary-Generals report¹ provides in-depth analysis of the many open questions and details, and underscores the importance of the issue for UN staff. We hope that the resumption of our work in both the Fifth and Sixth Committee will lead to a similarly well-coordinated and substantial result as was achieved during the resumed 61st session. The Sixth Committee should, in our view, once again focus its attention on the legal issues involved, and in particular ensure that the new system will be fully consistent with relevant rules of international law, principles of the rule of law and due process. A major concern in this respect is the question of the scope of the new system. We agree with the Secretary-General’s recommendation that certain non-staff personnel should also have access to effective means of dispute resolution. The new system should not turn a blind eye on the fact that in many UN offices, individuals with greatly differing contractual arrangements are working side by side over long periods of time. Those who are enjoying less favourable contractual conditions should not be punished even further by preventing them from accessing a proper justice system.

We look forward to discussing these and other issues, such as the election of judges, the draft statutes and legal assistance in the Working Group. We hope that once again, the Secretariat will be able to provide the Working Group with the necessary expertise to conclude our work successfully.

I thank you.

¹ A/62/294