



**Women's Foreign Policy Group UN Study Visit
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Alicia Bárcena Ibarra
Under Secretary-General for Management

Challenges for Reform

Dawn Calabia:

We have an amazing woman as our next speaker, and I also want to thank you for your cooperation in keeping your questions short and to the point so everybody gets an opportunity. Alicia Bárcena Ibarra is the new Under Secretary-General for Management, a position she was appointed to in January of this year. She is currently the second highest ranking female UN official. The woman who outranks her is the Deputy Secretary-General, and of course the Secretary-General himself.

Ms. Bárcena is a native of Mexico. She served as the Chef de Cabinet for the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and she was the Deputy Executive Secretary for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and also the Chief of Environment and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC and Coordinator of the UN Environment Programme and also a senior advisor to UN Development Programme.

She has one of the toughest jobs in the UN. She's got to oversee a budget. She's got to make sure dues get collected, that bills get paid and that this building gets renovated. She also is responsible for all the personnel policies, which you heard Assistant Secretary-General Orr

refer to the need to make some changes. So we're delighted to have her with us. Please proceed.

Under Secretary-General Alicia Bárcena Ibarra:

Thank you very, very much. It's really a fantastic opportunity and a great pleasure to be here this morning. I really appreciate this opportunity. And I know that you have been hearing a couple of things from my colleagues John Holmes and Bob Orr, so I will try to give an overview of where we are in terms of management, which is basically the responsibility I have now. But I also would like to tell you what we are doing.

First of all, I would like to say that unfortunately there is a perception that management and reform are synonymous, and this is not exactly correct. Management is the backbone of this organization, is the silent machinery of this organization. It has to be silent because as soon as it shows up it's because something is not working, because the elevator got screwed up, because this and that and the other. So what we do in my department is we have to -- silent machinery that is providing backbone to all the operations of the UN and that's management, really, is to make sure that everything works well and works well in an old building, which is quite a challenge. I have to tell you because this building is really old, and one of my responsibilities will be to renovate the building or to proceed on that. So I'll tell you a little bit about that. But I wanted really to make sure that everybody knows that management is about keeping everything working.

Now of course, my department is also responsible for preparing and producing a lot of the materials that the members states have asked us to do. And last year, basically it started with the outcome document in 2005, but actually last year the member states were prepared to move quite a bit in terms of reform. So yes, that's also part of the business we have to deal with.

And you see, we are in a very interesting moment, because we have been talking about reform for almost a decade in the UN and those reforms that members have been agreeing on have been piling up one by one. And Gillian knows this very well because she has also been part of the Secretariat in very senior positions.

But the thing is that at the end of last year, really on the 22nd of December in 2006, at 5 p.m., the member states made a lot of very important decisions regarding reform. And out of the 23 reforms proposed, 23 recommendations that were proposed to them by the Secretariat, they were prepared to move on nine of them, and they were prepared to hear more -- to have more information on another package. They were not prepared to hear all of the other package. So they discarded some of them. One example was the buyout proposal for staff which was discarded for the moment. But there were other reforms that they were ready to move on, and I will tell you a little bit about them. And another package of reforms they wanted to hear more information about to have more elements to move on.

So this is what happened on the 22nd of December last year. And then on January 1, 2007, we got a new Secretary-General. And having a new Secretary-General is not at all a minor issue for the United Nations because we have to make sure that two things happen here. One is that we are able to in certain ways provide the continuity to what member states have been agreeing on, to make sure that the machinery continues operating while at the same time having him come in with his new team, including me, and listening carefully to what he wants to do, what his priorities are. His priorities are not falling into an empty space, no. His priorities have to be carefully aligned with what the member states have been agreeing on. So as you can see it's a matter of how you make the machinery in certain ways fit in a way that the organization receives fresh air and the new proposals, but at the same time takes into account

what has been going on.

So this is basically what my department is about. It's about trying to be that bonding or that bridge between member states' priorities, between what the Secretary-General is wanting to do and the 38th floor, where I was too, so I know the 38th floor can be very impatient and saying we want this done immediately of course. But then the machinery, you know, is a machinery.

So we are the ones also who provide a lot of support to member states through ACABQ [Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions] that all of you know, which is the committee that reviews our budgets. It's a committee that is basically technical with individual experts coming from different countries, but they serve in their expert capacity, in their personal capacity, to assess all the budget and resources of these organizations.

Then after the ACABQ it goes to the Fifth Committee. As you know, the General Assembly has many committees. One of them is the Fifth Committee. This is what I would say constitutes the governance of the United Nations, in which I would say that the two major subsidiary bodies of the United Nations with real teeth in terms of political issues and budgetary issues, et cetera, are of course the Security Council and the Fifth Committee. The Security Council makes a lot of political decisions, and the Fifth Committee is the one which puts a lot of the resources, the money, and decides on the budgets.

This is what I would call the alignment of the governance of the institutions, which is one of the elements of the reform precisely. And what do we mean by that? We mean different things in terms of governance, but sometimes what we mean also is that countries, member states, we need them also to align themselves because sometimes we hear different things from the same member state. It depends on who you are talking to. So sometimes we are also asking

them, okay, give us clear directions of where you want to go on issues because sometimes when we talk to somebody here or somebody there from the same country we sometimes don't get the same answer. So that's also something important when we are talking about coherence that we also need from member states.

We in the Department of Management are that bridge between the Fifth Committee -- we are the ones who service the Fifth Committee. We are the technical secretariat of the Fifth Committee. But we also have to have our ears very open on what the Security Council is deciding. For example, if the Security Council decides that they want to go to Darfur with a heavy package, we, management, we have to be very attentive because that means that we will have to provide a lot of support. That is, in terms of procurement, in terms of personnel, in terms of what's going to happen. If a new mission is going to be established we have to work very closely with DPKO [Department of Peacekeeping Operations] to make sure that happens. And that comes from the Security-Council, but of course has to go to the Fifth Committee for the approval of resources. Each peacekeeping mission, of which we have 18, has to be approved individually. So that's also something that my department has to be very careful of.

The other part that my department has, in terms of stakeholders at the moment -- we have several stakeholders, member states. One through the Fifth Committee and the ACABQ, this is an expert committee. The other great stakeholder we have is the Board of Auditors, OIOS, which is the Office of Internal Oversight, and of course the JIU, which is the Joint Inspection Unit.

You will say, "what are those three bodies doing?" Well, they monitor what we do. One, OIOS, is supposed to do it internally, so they provide us with advice for how to change our management practices if we have any problems. The Board of Auditors is the external auditor,

and the JIU, Joint Inspection Unit, is the unit that looks into how the systems work. That is, it's like the system-wide inspection unit or auditing how we are working with WHO [World Health Organization] and FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization], et cetera, et cetera, if our systems are aligned. Just to give you an example, they make sure that our payroll is aligned. So they are the ones who help us with those topics.

Finally one of our major stakeholders, which is very important, is the staff. So my department is basically in charge also of making sure that the staff management relations can improve, which, as you know, has been a major problem in the United Nations. So this is something that I'm really interested in, and we are looking very seriously into the staff management relations.

Very quickly let me go, to what are the priorities because of course management has to do all of this, but the most important thing that we have to do in management is not to lose sight of what we want to do because sometimes many people think that budget is the one that is conducting the process or management is conducting the process. Of course not. Management has to be behind the priorities of this institution either given by the member states or given by the Secretary-General.

And I would say that the Secretary-General is particularly interested in the following topics that come from before, of course that is to say that this is not new. Let me give some examples. First of all, he is very interested that we improve peacekeeping delivery. That is, that the UN really delivers in terms of peacekeeping. And when I say deliver, it's that we deliver timely opportunely where we have to go with efficiency, with transparency and most of all with a human face. And to deliver in terms of peacekeeping means that today the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is very overstretched. My department is also very

overstretched because at the end of the year we will be servicing more than 100,000 military people in the field through 18 peacekeeping operations. And we are talking about three more coming up that are going to be of extreme importance.

Associated to how we deliver better in peacekeeping is this reform that the Secretary-General is proposing of splitting the two departments, the Department of Peacekeeping and the Department of Field Support. And together with this, in a certain way, the creation of the Department of Field Support that could be basically focusing more on how do we deliver better to the field missions, and not only to the peacekeeping missions, also to the special political missions that are being serviced in terms of logistical support and so forth by DPKO and by ourselves too. So in certain ways this realignment of the structure of peacekeeping will have an impact not only on the Department of Peacekeeping on the creation of field support but also on the Department of Management because we will have to be more proactive and delegating more authorities and more resources from management to DPKO.

The peacekeeping budgets are defined annually. So the peacekeeping budget will probably be increasing from \$5 billion to \$7 billion because we are talking about new peacekeeping missions that are coming up. The Darfur heavy support package, which is a priority of course for the Secretary-General now that President Bashir has agreed on moving ahead with the heavy package. We will probably also have Chad as one of the peacekeeping missions, and probably Central African Republic might also come up. And let's see how the Somalia crisis evolves. So there are many, many issues that we are looking at that will probably entail an increase in the budget of peacekeeping operations. So peacekeeping is, no question about it, one of the priorities of the Secretary-General.

The second one is the system-wide coherence. And I know that Bob discussed that.

And this is how the system can deliver as one. We are not talking about one UN, that's impossible. But how can we deliver as one. We are multiple, we are different, we are diverse, but we should deliver as one in terms of more coherence in the way we operate. And it would seem that I think the most relevant part is the gender architecture. And I think we are prepared in the United Nations to move ahead more forcefully in gender architecture. Today there are no women heading peacekeeping operations. That's bad news. We need women. That's very bad news.

Another priority of course is the Millennium Development Goals, and which I think we're going to get something very interesting out of them, which is a reinforced capacity but also the reflection of whether we need to add targets to the Millennium Development Goals. For example, loss of bio-diversity, energy efficiency. Do we need to add that to our targets? Maybe we should.

Special focus on Africa, the climate change that I'm sure Bob also talked to you about, the three special envoys that the Secretary-General is nominating -- because what we are realizing is what is the value added that the UN can bring to the climate change discussion, it's a lot. I think we are the only interlocutors now that can really move the agenda of climate change beyond the Kyoto protocol, which is stuck. It is stuck because of this divide between developing and developed countries because the big emitters, including the middle-income countries, should also probably come into the table and make some commitments, including my country. The other question is financing for development and aid for trade. So these are the substantive priorities.

And I know that I have very little time, so let me just quickly run you through some of the mechanisms and tools that we're going to use to make sure that these priorities are

accomplished. The most important one, the budget. No money, nothing, no? So I am starting with that. The budget is a very crucial issue this year because it's the first budget of the Secretary-General. And the budget -- we have three types of budgets in this house by the way, for those who don't know. The regular budget, which is the biennial budget, which amounts to \$4.2 billion for next biennial, 2008-2009. This is what we are submitting to countries in 35 programs, and these will go in the fall to the member states. So that's where we are.

But this budget has the unfortunate situation that for the last six biennials it has been operating under zero growth. That is, to do everything in the United Nations, including human rights, which I don't want to leave out because it's also a priority to the Secretary-General, we have to do everything with \$4.2 billion biennially, and this has not grown in the past. The other one is the one I was talking about, the peacekeeping operations, which is from \$5 to \$7 billion annually, plus the support account that is the budget that accompanies peacekeeping to be able to service that operation. And of course the other budget is one of the International Courts of Justice, the different international courts and the subsidiary organs of the United Nations. So these are the three budgets. We have to get them done this year. Otherwise we stop operations in 2008 and we can't do that.

The second priority is accountability and oversight. And I would say that this is a major priority for the Secretary-General, transparency, accountability and oversight. And he has started by making his own financial disclosure available. We are all going to try to go the same path as soon as the ethics office gives us the orientation on the best way to do it because there are some people that cannot make it public for security reasons because they could be sequestered or kidnapped or whatever. I mean I don't know. There are some people that are having a divorce, and they don't want the other side to know how many things they have.

Really, there are things like that. But anyway, transparency, accountability and oversight are really important for us, and we are asking all the senior people, all the USGs to have their senior compact ready to be posted on ISIC [International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities] for everybody to see what the priorities and targets are because one of the targets, by the way, is gender balance because with the trends that we have now in the Secretariat, we will achieve gender balance at the D2 level in 2085 and at the USG level, probably in 3000. I don't know. But do you see what I mean? We have to have a more proactive approach in monitoring this.

So accountability and oversight is very important. We are also looking into how we can balance OIOS and the Board of Auditors because they are clashing with each other. The members have created an International Audit Advisory Committee, so we are working with them on that. And of course one very important question on accountability and oversight is risk. One of the most risky operations we are going to be handling this year and next year and the following seven years -- it's like the apocalypse -- is this Capital Master Plan. It's going to be a seven-year plan to renovate this building, and we're going to renovate it in four phases. And we have to do it with environmental policies. We have to reduce -- we have already a target, with which we are we are sure we will comply of 30 percent efficiency. I mean efficiency in everything, you know. This is a very inefficient building. We have to put in recycling and we have to change a lot of things. We have to change the culture.

And I promise I will finish, but I have two more things to talk to you about, and one is human resources management. That is a key priority. 80 percent of the resources of the United Nations are people, 55,000 people, between the UN Secretariat and the funds and programs. For the Secretariat only, 37,000 people. So we have to manage properly, adequately, equitably

37,000 people from my department and we have to do it with, frankly, assistance of the prehistory, IMIS [Integrated Management Information Systems] and things of that sort. So we have to change a lot of things, including Galaxy. Applications get lost in the universe, they never come back, you know. People don't even know if their application went through or didn't go through, so we have to replace the recruitment system.

The Secretary-General has also made his priority mobility, but everybody is so scared about mobility. We have people that have been in their jobs for 25 years in the same office in the same desk in the same chair. We have to make sure that people are not afraid to move, and the only way to do that is to give them the incentive to move, the training, the package. I don't want people to misunderstand us when we say mobility. We're not going to put a gun to people to go away, no. What we're going to do is to offer them training and to offer them incentives. I mean a person that has been sitting there for 25 years in the same post in the same chair in the same office, I mean I think that person might want to think a little bit about what she or he wants to do with the rest of his life, you know. Anyway, I mean that's my own thinking.

The other part is that in human resources we are also very interested in administration of justice, internal administration of justice. Our system of administration of justice is dysfunctional, inequitable. Why? Because it was signed when the UN was 1,000 people but now we are 37,000. And it's too complicated. Up to now people, not even the managers understand. What is the JAB and the JBC and the ALU and the -- all these acronyms are awful. So we want to create a very straightforward system and the member states have already agreed to have an informal administration of justice system and a formal one, informal with an emphasis on mediation, arbitration, clear capacity to bring people to a table to agree on their problems. If they don't agree then they go to the formal systems and we put together a tribunal.

People file their complaints and it's followed up by judges. And those two tribunals are going to be legally binding for both the Secretariat and the staff. Clear cut, otherwise we go with the JAB and the JBC and the Panel and I don't know what. It's really outrageous. If the administration tribunal gets a case that is five years old, the manager probably doesn't even exist anymore, so I mean -- no, it's terrible. So we are really moving ahead on this administration of justice system.

The final topic I want to raise today is the Capital Master Plan. The Capital Master Plan is a very important thing that's going to happen in the United Nations because we have to get it right. This is the opportunity to make a blueprint out of the building in New York. We're talking about making this building modern, environmentally friendly, et cetera, et cetera. But that's going to take time. And that's where we're going to need a lot of help because we have to make sure that we minimize risks financially, the health risks, the environmental risks, the security risks, because we're going to have a couple of years in which in this building we're going to have working areas and construction areas at the same time.

So believe me, we are taking care of this very carefully. We have applied all the knowledge available to us to make sure that this is going to happen in the right way. My preference would have been to take everybody out and renovate it. Why not, right? But the problem is that everybody wants to stay in New York and everybody wants to stay not only in New York but in the eastern part of New York between 45th and -- you know, that's our problem, you know? Because if they ask me, we can go to Madrid or to Germany or even to Long Island City, you know, but no.

I mean so the members they made a decision that is putting out a lot of prospects. So everybody wants to stay around this 10 blocks, but that's going to be impossible. So we are

trying to get 1,000 people out of this building by the end of December. So we hope it will work well. We hope we will come with all your support.

And I stop here. I want to tell you how privileged I've been to be able to tell you a little bit about my work, which is the most difficult work in the United Nations Secretariat. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Ms. Calabria:

Now you understand why I said she is the woman with the toughest job. And of course, they gave it to a woman, only the second female Under Secretary-General for Management.

I have a question I'd like to start with. You mentioned something that has bothered a lot of us -- I was a UN staffer -- the lack of women in senior positions. What can we do to support efforts to see that changed?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

Indeed, I think it's a very important issue, and I think we are ready to take some actions, very specific actions, ones in which we need the member states, others in which we can do internally. The ones we can do internally is that we are creating a recruitment center because we will not attract women in a passive way. I mean if we put these vacancies in 'Galaxy' expecting that women are going to come up, and good women by the way -- we have to go out and find them. You see, we have to ensure that managers are ready to go out and find them. And the member states have to help us and you have to help us to find the best women available. I'm sure that we can get very good women, very capable women ready to go to peacekeeping missions everywhere.

We need the political will, which I think we have. The Secretary-General is very committed. He of course appointed a woman Deputy Secretary-General. He appointed me, a woman from a developing country, in management, which is really unprecedented. But the other part where we need the help of the member states is that the gender architecture needs to be reinforced and strengthened. And what I mean, gender architecture in terms of not only how we make sure more women come to the system but also how we mainstream the policies of women to all the programs of the UN more effectively.

Let me give you an example, and that is we need a monitoring system to make sure that managers are really achieving gender equilibrium or they are trying, at least. And we need cooperation between OHRM [Office of Human Resource Management], which is with me, and the Office of the Advancement of Women, which is in DESA [Department of Economic and Social Affairs]. We need to collaborate to see if they can be monitoring the way we are improving or not improving because I did the statistics last year of the women and the trends and I presented them to the Policy Committee and the Secretary-General at that time, Kofi Annan, and everybody was shocked. I did it by levels and the only level in which we have gender equity in the Secretariat is at the G level, in which of course we have more women than men, and at the B2 level, which is the lower level. But as soon as you start escalating a little bit upwards the situation becomes disastrous. So I think we have to make a lot of engagement in this. I think we have to make sure the Secretary-General in his senior appointments is considering women, but we have to make sure that they get good candidates.

So you can help us. Everybody can help us.

Question:

Elizabeth Latham, I run the U.S. Committee for the UN Development Programme, so my job is essentially to talk to Americans about the work of the United Nations in international development. You mentioned system-wide coherence and I'm wondering, from your point of view, how this one UN project in the field is going. I understand that there are eight pilot countries.

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

In relation to system-wide coherence, I would say that there are two things that are going on that I think would be very interesting to highlight. One is the eight pilot projects that are taking place and that where it's going to be a very interesting period to understand what are the problems that can be faced in countries like Vietnam, which is one of the pilot projects. So there is this collection of eight pilot projects in which UNDP, UNICEF, funds and programs, specialized agencies, everybody is trying to align because it's not going to be, as I said before, it's not that they are going to be in the same building with the same program, no. But how do they align themselves in ways that you can service the government better as one UN? The problem is also the governments, to tell you the truth, because the Minister of Agriculture, his constituencies FAO and the Minister of Health, his constituency is WHO, so we also need their help, the help of governments to help us align their own agendas so we can deliver better.

The second element I think you will be very surprised to know, and pleased I think, is that we had a meeting in Rome, what we call the HLCM, which is the High Level Committee on Management. The High Level Committee on Management and High Level Committee on Programs, we get together and then we report to what we call the Chief Executive Board, which is conformed by all the specialized agencies, funds and programs, chaired by the Secretary-

General.

The case of management, we got together to make sure that we can align our business practices because it's not only to have more coherence of programs but also if we can apply for example the same standards, IPSAS, which is the [International] Public Sector Accounting Standards or we can apply the ERP, the Enterprise Resource Planning, or if we can apply the payroll for example. Why does everybody have separate payrolls? Maybe we can align the system of accounts.

I think that as soon as we are able to align our business practices, this will help a lot in terms of coherence. Even in mobility, now there are people who cannot go to funds and programs or to specialized agents automatically because the types of contracts are not the same. So we have a lot of homework to do on the management side in which I think we have quite a bit of consensus on the other side, that is the programmatic side. I think these eight pilots will show where to go.

Question:

I would like to ask a question about the UN Board of Auditors. Are they also being audited by higher authorities? That is the first question, and then do they apply the same regulation at the government level because the Secretary-General has oversight.

Under Secretary-General. Bárcena:

I think that it's very important to make a distinction regarding the auditors. The Internal Office of Investigation and Audit Oversight, which is OIOS, basically reports to the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General. It's an internal function. The Board of Auditors is

confirmed by countries, by the specialized auditing offices of countries. In our case now the Board of Auditors is chaired by France and is constituted by South Africa, France, Philippines, and of course U.K. which is also auditing specialized agencies and some funds and programs.

So the Board of Auditors actually does its auditing based on the International Institute of Auditors and it's totally independent. In fact, the Board of Auditors does not report to the Secretary-General. They report directly to the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee. That is an external audit fully, truly, and the methodologies they use to audit our system is totally aligned with the international agreed standards of auditing. As I said before, now the Board of Auditors is being chaired by the French, but we also have Philippines and South Africa, and they also play a very important role in the auditing.

Ms. Calabria:

I'd just like to clarify for some of our members, one of the reasons the whole audit question is so important is that the Congress of the United States was very upset by the Oil for Food Program and other internal problems they saw in the UN system. And they insist that it has to be substantial changes in the audit functions. The Gingrich-Mitchell Commission and the U.S. Institute of Peace also did a study and came up making recommendations about audits. And the U.S. in fact would like all OIOS reports to be public, which obviously is a sensitive matter since they're used as management tools. So this is some of the pressures that our guest has to deal with when parliaments makes certain kinds of demands.

Patricia Ellis:

This is a personnel question. I'd like to raise the issue of retirement age at the United

Nations. If you could, talk a little bit about the pros and cons. I know that it does affect women a lot because a lot of women have been getting into higher level positions later in life and they had to retire. I know a number of examples. I know that there are down sides, but different countries have different retirement ages. But with people living longer, I'm wondering if you're thinking about changing this.

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

The retirement age, it's working the following way now. Anybody that has come to the system before 1990, the retirement age is 60 years old. Anybody that came after 1990, the retirement age is 62. Now whether that's appropriate or not, that's a very interesting question by the way, because the Fifth Committee went into discussions about the ASHI, which is the After Service Health Insurance, which is very expensive for the United Nations system.

So we were even talking at some point that it might be interesting to explore what you're saying, that maybe the retirement age could be prolonged one year or two. But this has to be the member states who will have to help us with this.

Up to now, the retirement age is 60 for people that came in before 1990 and 62 for people that came in after 1990. For higher level positions, ASGs and USGs, there is no restriction; until you fall apart, I suppose. But I mean actually there has not been a decision. But of course, that's reasonable to think about. So that's where we're at.

Question:

You mentioned that your budget had been closed at \$4.2 billion. I don't know if the same applies in terms of zero growth in your other budgets. Could you explain why that has

been the case and how you see that, either positively or negatively, impacting what you're trying to do?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena:

When I say zero growth, it means that the budget that has been approved every year considers zero growth, which means that you stay under the parameters for the regular activities of the United Nations. However, what you are correct in saying is that whenever there is a reform -- let me put an example, administration of justice. We cannot go for a new system of administration of justice with zero growth, so we present separately to the member states, how much would it cost in addition to what we are spending today.

So a full system of administration of justice, a good one with all the elements there, will cost \$37 million. What we are spending today is \$10 million. What we need in addition, \$27 million. For how long? Well, in the first year we are asking \$1.5 million, in the second year we're asking \$5 million, and the third year -- you see, we are not asking member states to come up with everything immediately. No, we are asking them, let's do it gradually. And also, let's see if we can offset from other costs of course. But there are locations in which you cannot offset because if you are talking about 37,000 people, it's very difficult to offset costs of a numbers man that only sits here at the moment and we want to put a numbers man in the Congo, for example -- where we have a lot of cases of harassment and conditions of service and so forth. Anyway, that's the regular budget.

Now the peacekeeping budget, the growth of that budget is because it's defined peacekeeping by peacekeeping mission. An example, every year we review the 18 peacekeeping missions. One example is UNIFIL, Lebanon. That peacekeeping mission is

probably going to grow because of the needs of the field. Who decides that? The Security Council. Once the Security Council says, "yes, we agree and we want to send more troops or more marines or more x or more y," then it comes to us and we prepare the additional budget needs.

So in the peacekeeping case it's mission by mission. We are calculating for example that the surge or the increase in Darfur will be costing probably around \$300 million already. That is a heavy package itself, no? So we're talking about 3,000 people that are going to go there now, 3,000 military soldiers. I hope I was able to answer your question.

Ms. Calabia:

Maybe you could explain the difference between the assessed budget and voluntary contributions.

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

Yes, absolutely. The assessed budget is the one that corresponds to the contributions from member states. As you know, we have contributions -- I don't have the numbers here in hand, but I can certainly share them with you. We have more or less fifteen countries that are the major contributors of the United Nations and countries that have done a great effort, I must say, to become the first fifteen contributors. The U.S. is of course the first. Japan is the second. And then thereon, we have different countries that contribute.

That money is considered the assessed money, that is the money that comes to the UN. And that is the money that we consider for the assessed budget, that is the budget that goes to the regular budget. However countries also give assessed contributions to peacekeeping

missions. And again, the assessment and the contributions are peacekeeping mission by peacekeeping mission. So that's what we call the assessed contributions.

The extra-budgetary resources or in certain ways the support, let's say contributions, are monies that come on a voluntary basis through trust funds or through other mechanisms, and come to the UN as donations for example or even staff that gives money when they are invited to give, let's say, for example, a lecture that you cannot receive money. Well, we donate it to the UN. So there are forms in creating trust funds that become extra-budgetary resources or special programs that certain donors want to give for particular purposes. So that's what we call the extra-budgetary or voluntary resources.

Gillian Sorensen:

The dues issue is very troubling. We recall that for twelve years the U.S. fell further and further behind and did not pay its dues. Eventually that was set in order by Ambassador Holbrooke. But here again we're falling into deep arrears. I have heard the figure \$500 or \$600 million in both the regular dues and the voluntary contributions. How do you manage with that if you're missing the key piece of financial contributions from the largest or wealthiest member? How do you fill that gap and how does the U.S. manage to keep its primary position here when it falls behind in such huge numbers with their payments to the UN?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

This is a very good question, which I cannot answer in detail. But of course, my comptroller can certainly do a very good job. But I can tell you that there are certain things that can be done. The member states approve the Working Capital Fund, which is a fund that helps

us to sometimes bridge, as we say, these types of problems. We are getting a very good response, for example, in the Capital Master Plan. Let me put it this way, member states behave differently for different things in a way in terms of paying, even the United States, by the way. They are sometimes very timely when it's about peacekeeping missions or the Capital Master Plan and things like that, but maybe not when it comes to the assessed contribution or the -- because the monies they are giving us go for different purposes, either for peacekeeping or the Capital Master Plan or for the budgetary itself. If you give me time, I will come back to you because I know you're here all afternoon, and I can give you an update where the U.S. is at this moment.

I must say that our relationship with the U.S. has changed, and I feel very positively that we have been able to raise these questions. They are quite aware of the importance of the contributions. I think that the new U.S. Ambassador with whom we're going to be later on is a person that -- let's say, when he was going to be appointed, I think he made a very interesting speech about how important the United Nations is for the U.S. and how important it is to them to come more opportunely in terms of contributions.

But just to give you an example of what has been happening with the Capital Master Plan, we have received the contributions from ten countries already. And the decision was made on the 22nd of December. So ten countries have been paying us in a very timely way, and we already have the money to start the process. Of course, there is some countries that decided to pay a lump sum, other countries that decided to pay annually. So we think that in each part of the system we will have to work in a different way.

Ms. Sorensen:

Do those ten include the United States?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

The ten include the United States, yes. So I must say that there is a positive reaction. I think they are aware of it. Say, for example, I think but I don't want to mislead you because I think they paid the arrears of one of the previous years in full in January, but I can come back to you with that information. For example, I'll say, I think that's a gesture of very good will with the new administration. The U.S. government paid one arrear of previous years. That doesn't mean that they don't owe more money. Of course they do. But why is the U.S. contribution so important? Because proportionately it's the largest one, and that's very important.

Ms. Calabria:

22 percent of the regular budget and 26 percent of peacekeeping, to give you some idea of proportionality, the highest contribution.

Donna Constantinople:

I guess what's bothering me is this gender balance issue. My question is, what in your opinion is going to push apart? In other words, if there is not a woman heading one of the eighteen peacekeeping missions, what has to happen to raise awareness and more than raise awareness, result in something? Is it something that is only going to happen internally? I guess an earlier question was what can we do to help, but maybe that's too vague. I mean what is going to happen here?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

Well, I think that the most important -- I mean first of all, we need to have the political will of the top, and I think we have it with the Secretary-General, yes.

Ms. Constantinople:

You think that the Secretary-General sees this as a top priority?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

I think he does. He definitely does. But he has to listen to this often. Do you see what I mean? It has to be constantly reinforced.

The General Assembly made the decision that we should aim for 50/50. And there are targets there in the General Assembly reports. So what we need is that member states hold us accountable to this, you know, make sure that each manager is really focusing on gender balance in their particular units and departments to make sure that we all reach the target. This is what I think it's missing.

And also from our perspective, my perspective, I want to really hold them accountable and in a more -- I tell you something that we are discussing in my department so you can know. The managers have somehow the centralized authority to select people, and then we evaluate them at the end of the year. So I was telling my people of OHRM, you know, I think we have to take away their authority if we don't see that they are moving on gender balance. That's going to scare them quite a bit. I mean if we tell them I'm sorry, you are not reaching your targets, each department has a different target; if you're not reaching it, we will take away the authority until -- and we will do it for you. Do you see what I mean? I mean we have to think about this

type of thing because, as you say, voluntarily, passively, it's not going to happen.

Ms. Constantinople:

It does start at the top, so the question is how close are you to even getting a woman in as head of a mission?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

I am constantly talking to Jean-Marie Guéhenno and to Jane Holl Lute about this. And we discuss this, and of course there is Security Council Resolution 1325 on the gender balance of peacekeeping operations. I think we have to keep pushing. And also, I understand that it's not easy for women to go into peacekeeping operations. But I'm sure that we can find good candidates. I don't say half and half; maybe at the beginning, ten percent. But at the moment having no one, I think is disastrous.

Question:

You mentioned a recruitment center for women, have you already started doing that and when is the target date?

Under Secretary-General Bárcena :

It's not only for women. The recruitment center is going to operate for all the targets that we have, including geographical representation, training, skills, et cetera. We are going to start -- we have already started in a way. We are also waiting for the support of member states. Our idea is to create it as of 2008. However we are starting now to put our act together because you

see, the problem of OHRM, the Office of Human Resources Management, is we're talking about a group of people, let's say 400 people, that are servicing 37,000. They are so overstretched, so it's impossible to have a proactive function like that first if we don't have the right technology, which we don't, and second if we don't have the tools and the systems of recruitment and so forth. So there's a lot of modernization that we have to do, and that's what we're trying to do now.

Ms. Calabia:

I want to thank you for a truly extraordinary and very frank discussion. We're looking forward to seeing you and we hope you can come to Washington to consider meeting with us again.

Ms. Bárcena :

Thank you very much. I'll come back to Gillian's question with more proper information.

Ms. Calabia:

This is the woman for facts and figures in the UN. Thank you.