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## **TIP OF THE MONTH**

**December 2007**

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### **UNITED NATIONS JUSTICE REFORM UPDATE**

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In April 2007, the General Assembly approved a resolution for the implementation of the first serious overhaul of the administration of justice within the United Nations in 60 years, deciding to establish “a new, independent, transparent, professionalized, adequately resourced and decentralized system”. Despite the fact that Member States indicated that it wanted the new system in place by January 2009, the General Assembly did not take any action since April. Instead, on 6 December 2007, it established an ad hoc committee to continue working on the new system. The committee is open to all Member States, members of the specialized agencies or members of the IAEA. The committee will meet from 10-18 April and on 21 and 24 April 2008 and report on its work to the General Assembly at its 63rd session in 2008.

The biggest obstacle to implementing the new system is of course funding. Given the current environment where UN financial management is under scrutiny and no-growth budgets, it is not likely that the Member States contributing the most to the UN budget will agree to create a new expensive UN bureaucracy – no matter that it would go a long way in giving UN staff members, who have no resort to domestic courts, the right to have their appeals decided in accordance with minimum standards of procedural due process. Expectations are that the original proposal by the Redesign Panel will be watered down and changes to the existing system will be modest.

Happy Holidays!

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\* I specialize in the representation of international civil servants, and serve as legal advisor to several staff unions/associations of international organizations, some of which are based in Vienna, Austria. For further information, please send me an e-mail or visit my website.