

STATEMENT BY MR. MUHAMMAD YUSSUF OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

New York, 22 October 1997

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the G-77 and China on Agenda item 116 on the Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 1998-1999.

The G-77 and China would like to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his budget proposals included in document A/52/6/Rev.1 (supplement No. 6), vols. I and II.

Our thanks also go to the Chairman of the ACABQ, Amb. Mselle, and the Vice-Chairman of CPC, for the presentation of the reports of their respective committees.

Mr. Chairman,

It is regrettable that the Organisation continues to find itself in a serious financial situation. With a projected deficit in the regular budget of \$272 million in the end of this year, the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in his report A/52/444 dated 8 October 1997 on the financial situation of the United Nations, that one more year is added to a pattern of cash deficits in the regular budget account. We find no legal basis, Mr. Chairman, for those who have the capacity to pay but withhold payments of their assessed contributions. The G-77 and China reaffirms the legal obligation of Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions in order to allow the Organisation to finance properly the mandated programmes and activities. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, without the fulfillment by Member States of their financial obligations to the Organisation, the whole exercise we are embarking upon today could be meaningless.

The G-77 and China would also like to reaffirm the role of the Fifth Committee as the main committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters. In this regard, we wish to point out with concern the tendency of some bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters by disregarding rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

The G-77 and China also wishes to recall resolution 41/213 where the General Assembly outlined the principles to follow in the planning, programming and budgeting process, including the need for Member States to participate in the budgetary preparation from its early stages and throughout the process, as well as some elements to improve the process, notably the importance to ensuring the follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the CPC. In this context, the G-77 and China reaffirms the role of CPC in that process.

The G-77 and China reiterates that the medium-term plan, which constitutes the principal policy directive of the Organisation, should continue to serve as the framework for the formulation of the programme budget. In recalling the priority areas identified in the medium-term plan, the G-77 and China emphasizes the need to provide adequate level of resources for the development activities of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Secretary-General on "The impact of approved savings measures on the implementation of

mandated programmes and activities" (A/C.5/51/53) has been before the Fifth Committee for the past few weeks. As stated in the Statement of the G-77 and China on this report, the need to address the shortfalls reflected in the Secretary-General's report during the consideration of the proposed programme budget 1998-1999 is a matter of priority for the Group.

The G-77 and China wishes to recall that the level of the approved budget outline was higher than the one proposed by the Secretary-General. Hence, the Group believes that all mandated programmes and activities should be fully implemented, as the resources requested by the Secretary-General for carrying out the approved mandates have been authorized by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General, as the chief administrative officer of the Organisation, is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that the resource requirements that would enable the Secretariat to fully implement all the mandated activities and programmes, are submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration. Accordingly, his budget proposal should be submitted on full cost basis in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions. The G-77 and China has noted that this is not the case in the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999 for many sections. In that connection, we take note of the Secretary-General's intention to phase-out the gratis personnel, and we trust that this will be done in full compliance with General Assembly resolution 51/243 as recently adopted by consensus by Member States.

Taking this into account, Mr. Chairman, the G-77 and China underscores the need to examine in detail the proposed reduction in staff, especially at the lower level, to avoid any further negative implications on the implementation of the mandated programmes and activities. The G-77 and China also reiterates its concern from the use of vacancy rate as a budgetary tool to achieve further reductions in the budget. In this regard, we agree with the ACABQ observation that the higher vacancy rate seriously hampers the delivery of mandated programmes. Whereas there is a proposal, Mr. Chairman, to reduce UN staff, the G-77 and China notes that an amount higher than the outlays for the 1996-1997 budget has been proposed for the 1998-1999 programme budget for consultants and expert groups. The G-77 and China agrees with the ACABQ recommendation that recourse to consultants should only be made when required expertise is not available in the Organisation. Moreover, the selection of consultants and experts should be on as wide as geographical basis as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China notes that for the 1998-1999 programme budget, the Secretary-General has proposed net budgeting for the International Civil Service Commission and its secretariat, the Joint Inspection Unit and its secretariat and the services provided by the UN at the Vienna International Centre. Pending the receipt of the report requested by ACABQ in paragraph 45 of its report (A/52/7), and a specific decision by the General Assembly on the concept of net budgeting, the G-77 and China concurs with ACABQ that the status quo should be maintained.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to express the intention of the G-77 and China to engage in a positive and constructive spirit in the exercise to approve an adequate budget level that will ensure the full implementation of all mandated programmes and activities. The Group intends to come back with more specific details of its position in the context of the section-by-section analysis of the proposed budget.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the G-77 and China takes note of the issuance of document A/52/303. We intend to come back to it at the appropriate time.

Thank you.

