



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS KAREN LINGENFELDER, COUNSELLOR, TO THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 148: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: CROSSCUTTING ISSUES, AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY - FIFTH COMMITTEE (New York, 6 May 2015)

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 148 : Administrative and budgetary aspects of financing United Nations peacekeeping operations - cross-cutting issues.
2. At the outset, Mr Chairman, the Group wishes to once again pay tribute to the men and women who serve in the peacekeeping missions with such a high level of commitment, professionalism and courage, especially those who have lost their lives in the service of humanity.
3. The Group would like to thank Mr Atul Khare, Under-Secretary General, for Field Support, Ms Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant-Secretary General, Controller, Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Mrs Carmen Lapointe, Under-Secretary General, Office of Internal Oversight Services, Ms Carole Wamuyu Wainaina, Assistance-Secretary General for Human Resources Management, and Mr Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the ACABQ for introducing their respective reports.

Mr Chairman,

4. As mentioned by the Group during the session on the Organization of Work, the G77 and China deems necessary that when considering this agenda item relating to cross cutting issues, it must be taken into account that the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations is currently undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the United Nations Peace Operations. As it is known this review will, among others, consider the managerial, administrative and financial challenges relating to this process. Consequently, the Group reiterates its proposal that these matters be addressed with a practical approach bearing in mind that a more comprehensive analysis may be necessary when the outcome report from the High-level Panel is presented in the forthcoming 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Meanwhile, the Group will seek further clarification on the work currently being undertaken by the High-level Panel in order to obtain more clarity on how its findings relate to other ongoing peacekeeping initiatives.
5. The Group of 77 and China would also like to recall that the Secretary General's proposal for a global service delivery model as well as a detailed report on the implementation of the information and communications technology strategy recently adopted by the General Assembly, will be placed, for consideration by the General Assembly, on the agenda of its 70th session.
6. Keeping these initiatives in mind, the Group believes that our discussions during this session should focus on issues where we do not foresee major changes happening next year, as a result of these initiatives. This would allow us to focus on other important aspects of cross cutting issues that could lead the Committee to a much needed short and to-the point cross cutting resolution.

7. Nevertheless, the Group of 77 and China reiterates its opinion that during this session, the following key areas will have to be tackled and looks forward to engaging constructively on these issues during the informal consultations:

I. The allocation of needed, necessary resources to safeguard the safety and security of Peacekeepers, in view of their deployment in increasingly challenging security environments where they face asymmetric threats as well as the sharp increase of troop fatalities in recent years. In this regard the Group will inquire about the measures taken by the Secretary General to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2086, which called upon him "to take all measures deemed necessary to strengthen United Nations field security arrangements and improve the safety and security of all military contingents, police officers, military observers and, especially, unarmed personnel".

II. To ensure that the process of formulation, presentation, and approval of the peacekeeping budgets are done on the basis of their mandates and the real situation on ground, and not as an arbitrary, across-the-board cost-cutting exercise;

III. Ensure transparency and consistency in the preparation of mission budgets, particularly with regard to the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and related budgetary arrangements;

IV. To assess the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy of the Secretary General, in particular the proposal to shift the financial model for the Regional Service Center and the discussion on the post-GFSS. Within this context, analyze the Fifth Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the strategy as well as the implementation of major business transformation projects related to peacekeeping operations including IPSAS and ERP/Umoja;

V. The financial and budgetary implementation of intermission cooperation and related mechanisms, in order to ensure that they do not contravene rules approved by the General Assembly, especially the provisions that prohibit the utilization of cross borrowing between active missions; and

VI. To comprehensively address the systemic and unresolved issues and difficulties faced by the Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries, including under-representation in the Secretariat and mission civilian components, matters related to timely settlement of death and disability compensation claims, as well as the settlement of dues owed to troop-contributing countries for Contingent Owned Equipment.

8. The Group restates that the Budget preparation of Peacekeeping missions and their approval must be guided by the principle that each peacekeeping mission has its own mandate and functions, faces its own challenges, and operates in a unique environment. The Group continues to be deeply concerned by a growing trend of arbitrary budget reductions, guided by financial imperatives, the need for additional resources in other peacekeeping missions or an arbitrary overall target for peacekeeping expenditures, in blatant disregard of the specific needs of missions. Even more concerning is the fact that some alleged "efficiency measures" is sometimes pursued at the expense of operational capacities, and the safety and security of peacekeepers.

9. The Group of 77 and China recognizes the political and security difficulties faced when responding to crisis in a timely manner and thanks the Secretary General for his efforts in that regard. Yet, the Group expresses its concerns and would like to caution that new challenges shall not be a justification for openly breaching decisions of the General Assembly and the basic budgetary principles and procedures.

10. On the reports before us, the Group believes that the annual overview report should play an important role in providing information on the strategic direction United Nations peacekeeping is taking. We share the view of the ACABQ that the cross cutting report has become a lengthy document, lacking focus and precision. From reading the report, it was not clear to us when specific action or guidance is being requested from the Member States with respect to any initiative or policies outlined in the report. We trust this issue will be addressed in the next overview report.

11. While recognizing the benefits that may arise from inter-mission cooperation under some circumstances, the Group recalls that inter-mission cooperation cannot take place to the detriment of the independence of missions' budgets and the transparency of the budgetary process. The Group of 77 and China reiterates the decisions by the General Assembly that prohibits cross-borrowing between active missions and expresses its intention to seek further clarification on this matter during informal consultations.

12. The Group stresses that troop-contributing countries make an invaluable contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security while making great sacrifices under difficult, harsh, complex and often dangerous situations. In this regard, the Group would like to emphasize the importance for the Secretary General to continue to closely consult with the troop-contributing countries on all matters related to peacekeeping operations.

13. Furthermore, the Group finds it difficult to understand the continued lack of improvement in the representation in the Secretariat of troop- and police-contributing countries, particularly at senior management level, despite repeated calls by the General Assembly that the Secretary General takes further concrete efforts to ensure adequate representation of troop- and police-contributing countries in all relevant departments, particularly in DPKO and DFS, in line with their contributions to United Nations peacekeeping. The Group will be interested to receive more information on steps taken in this regard.

Mr Chairman,

14. The Group of 77 and China will maintain its position and express its regret that the Office of Internal Oversight Services is conducting evaluations beyond its mandate and will continue to request that the report : "Evaluation of the implementation and results of protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations" contained in document A/68/787, be disregarded.

15. The Group of 77 and China would like to underline the importance we attach to both approved military and civilian mandates of peacekeeping operations. It is an established reality that peacekeeping mandates have become more complex, wide ranging and multidimensional in recent years, with objectives that go well beyond simple peacekeeping. It has long passed the time when the benefits of having multidimensional peacekeeping mandates were questioned. It would be a terrible setback if the pressure to reduce costs in a context of new and emerging challenges to international peace and security should result in a return to the prevalence of military solutions that disregard the need for parallel and effective peace building efforts. In this regard, the Group welcomes the interaction of peacekeeping missions with the Peacebuilding Commission and encourages this relationship to be strengthened. Compromising the ability of missions to perform the substantive civilian activities foreseen in mandates undermines exit strategies and constitutes a recipe for prolonged military presence. The Group notes that peacekeeping missions that have undergone a "civilian staffing review" have already had their civilian component significantly reduced and, in this regard, cautions against an interpretation of the staffing review mandate as a means to applying further cost cuts.

16. In that context, we are distressed that, in spite of the progress made by Member States in recognizing the critical role played by quick-impact projects in strengthening relations between missions and local populations and in accomplishing missions objectives, we cannot avoid petty discussions with regards to small provisions for such types of activities. Reduced resources for QIPs do not constitute an efficiencies but rather arbitrary cost cuts that jeopardize mandate implementation as well as the safety of United Nations personnel. The Group reaffirms the critical role played by Quick Impact Projects and stresses the need to ensure that funds for implementation of QIPS are readily available during all phases of the mission.

Mr Chairman,

17. The Group is concerned by recent media reports of sexual abuse of children by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic and stresses its agreement with the ACABQ comments on the special measures to be taken for the protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Whilst noting that the number of allegations received in 2014, in respect of peacekeeping and special political missions, is the lowest recorded since the special measures were first put in place, one case of substantiated sexual exploitation and abuse is one case too many. It is important that efforts continue to reduce the number of allegations and the length of time taken to investigate them, in particular cases involving most egregious forms of sexual abuse, especially against children, while fully implementing a zero tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse.

Mr Chairman,

18. The Group of 77 and China assures you of its constructive participation under this agenda item.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.