



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MOHAMED GAD, MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR A BRIEFING BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON MANAGEMENT REFORM (New York, 22 May 2018)

Your Excellency Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,
Colleagues and friends,

1. At the outset, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Mr President, for convening this meeting. It is pertinent and timely. The Group also appreciates the Secretary General's briefing on his proposal on management reform, which will be examined by the Fifth Committee later this month. This is a visible demonstration of his continued commitment to a transparent, inclusive, and consultative process.

Mr. President, Secretary General,

2. We are all cognizant of the juncture multilateralism is passing through. There is indeed a lot at stake. The UN is grappling with some serious challenges regarding perceptions of its relevance and its impact on the ground. I take this opportunity to reiterate on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our unequivocal belief in the value and importance of multilateralism, and strengthening the Organization to better fulfill its mandates, especially with increasingly limited resources. This is why the Group played a central role in the consensus adoption of resolution 72/266. This resolution paved the way for the Secretary General to further elaborate on his initial proposal. It also approved the Secretary General's proposal to move the UN from a biennial to an annual budget, which is one of the most significant shifts in the program planning and budgeting process of the Organization since the 1970s.

3. Having now completed, as it were, the first part of our journey, we are now beginning the second and perhaps more difficult stage. We have always said that reform is a process, and this is a process we must undertake together. In this regard, it is worthwhile to restate some guiding principles.

4. First, the Group of 77 and China emphasizes that a key guiding principle of management reform must be increasing transparency and accountability to Member States, including the accountability of the Secretariat to this Assembly. There is no disagreement on the need to cut cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. On this point, everyone is in full agreement. However, bureaucracy within the Secretariat is distinct from the oversight functions of the General Assembly, especially when it comes to the oversight exercised by Member States on how our financial contributions are spent by the Secretariat. To this end, we commend the Secretary General's commitment to accountability, and we will continue to support his efforts to advance a true culture change for more transparency and accountability across the United Nations.

5. Second, the goal of reform is to enable the UN to deliver on its mandates. It is not to cut costs or posts. This is a critical philosophical starting point, costs or outcomes. In the same vein, the 134

countries of the Group of 77 and China therefore reaffirm our commitment to provide the Secretary General with the resources he needs, and we call on all countries in a position to do so to fulfill our financial obligations to the United Nations in full, on time, and without conditions. It is unrealistic to call for the UN to function effectively, fully implement its mandates, and undertake major change while imposing unilateral political conditions for the payment of assessed contributions. If we expect the Secretary General to push for reform, we must give him the tools to do so.

6. Third, having signaled our political support last year to the Secretary General in his reform efforts, the time has come to look into the details. In this, it is worth keeping in mind that what we approve at Headquarters will have wider implications across the United Nations system. At a time when the UN is under attack, we must proceed with reform, but also with prudence. Reform must be undertaken to create a more responsive, but also more responsible and credible Organization. Particularly as these reforms directly impact the financial and administrative management of the UN, the G77 and China will carefully examine the proposals before us to assess how these changes can improve the delivery of outcomes, and how it will complement the reform processes in other tracks.

7. Fourth, it is important to appreciate the complexity of the work performed at UN Headquarters by the management and administrative divisions. The Group is appreciative of the Secretary General's focus on delivering results on the ground. At the same time, we must also remember that UN Headquarters does not only service mandates in the field, but also has mandates to Member States, including servicing our legislative and judicial functions. The Group therefore welcomes the Secretary General's goal of system wide improvement in service delivery. As a first step, we welcome the greater utilization of new tools developed in recent years to provide more information and detail to Member States on how the program budget performs. This has helped Member States to more tightly link resource allocation with performance indicators and mandated tasks, within our commonly agreed strategic framework.

8. Finally, the Group of 77 and China stresses once again the importance of ensuring equitable geographical representation and gender parity at all levels. The Group commends the progress thus far by the Secretary General, especially in gender parity. We now look forward to intensified efforts to achieving equitable geographical representation. Geographical representation and gender parity must go hand in hand. We look forward to a comprehensive geographical representation strategy that also identifies the inherent biases in processes that allow for domination by certain regional groupings of particular departments or senior management posts. We also stress the need to ensure fair and increased access to United Nations procurement opportunities for developing countries and countries in transition, as highlighted in multiple General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. President, Secretary General,

9. This is a Member State-driven process. The Group of 77 and China will constructively engage with our partners and all stakeholders in the discussion that will take place later this month in the Fifth Committee on management reform, with a view to realizing our shared objective of a better functioning United Nations, that is fit for purpose, and able to provide the global frameworks needed to address the wide array of challenges the world encounters today. This is our firm commitment to you and to one another.

I thank you, Mr. President.