



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR LYLE DAVIDSON, COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE AGENDA ITEM 134: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2016-2017: OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE ACABQ, AT THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 25 November 2015)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 134 : Proposed Programme Budget 2016-2017, in particular the Operational Arrangements of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

At the outset, the Group would like to thank Ms. Carole Wainaina, Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Human Resources Management, for introducing the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/70/544 and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for his statement on behalf of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, particularly in light of its critical role in guiding deliberations in the Fifth Committee. In this regard, the Group welcomes the continued efforts of the Committee to improve their own working methods and notes with appreciation the results already achieved, particularly with regard to the improving the timely issuance of documentation.

The Group notes that the volume and complexity of the Advisory Committee's workload has increased significantly in recent years. As a consequence, the Committee now meets for up to 78 weeks; equivalent to almost 20 of the 24 months in the biennium. Such operational requirements demand the full-time presence of Committee members in New York. Yet, the conditions of service of those members of the Committee on "travel status" equates them to members of UN bodies that have annual meetings of only two to four weeks.

The Group concurs with the view of the Chair of the Advisory Committee that the operational independence of the Committee would be strengthened by the establishment of identical terms and conditions for all Committee members, based on the principle of "equal pay for equal work". The Group is further of the view that the current members of the Committee should have the option to serve the remainder of their terms under the conditions applicable to each of them, so as to provide the necessary flexibility during the transition to any new conditions of service.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China would like to recall that the issue of the operational arrangements of the Advisory Committee has been on the agenda of the Fifth Committee since the 67th session, and that it is now high time for a decision to be taken on this matter.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China reiterates its commitment to participate actively in consultations on this agenda item, and urges all delegations to engage positively and constructively

in order for an agreement to be reached during this main session.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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