



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
AMBASSADOR CONROD HUNTE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM
117: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND
FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS - PROPOSED
PROGRAMME BUDGET OUTLINE FOR THE BIENNIUM 2010-2011, IN THE
FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE 63RD SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 19 December 2008)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 117, in particular on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2010-2011.
2. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank the Controller, Mr. Jun Yamazaki, and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for their introduction of the respective reports of the Secretary General and the Advisory Committee.
3. The Group fully endorses the comments of the ACABQ. We deeply regret that such an important item has been introduced so late and that the report of ACABQ on this matter was not issued with sufficient time, in order to give the Committee the opportunity for a proper consideration of this issue to facilitate the intergovernmental process. We sincerely hope that this situation does not reoccur. We recall that Rule 103.1 of the PPBME Rules and Regulations required the budget outline to be submitted by 15 August of the off-budget year. While recognizing the revised programme planning and budgeting process authorized in resolution 58/269, it is still critical for this important document to be issued in a timely manner.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the submission of the proposed program outline for the biennium 2010-2011, which in accordance with the provisions of Annex I of the General Assembly resolution 41/213, provides Member States with a preliminary indication of the resources required in the coming biennium and, once adopted, will form the basis of the budget preparations of the Secretary General. We also note that the General Assembly is considering a number of proposals and reports that will also lead to an increase in the preliminary estimates for the biennium 2010-2011. We believe that the proposed budget outline should have presented the fullest possible picture of the Organization's estimates of resources for the coming biennium. According to the ACABQ, a more realistic picture of the budget would increase the level of the regular budget to USD 5.2 billion. In this context, the Group wishes to reaffirm its position that resources approved by the General Assembly should be commensurate with all the mandated programmes and activities in order to ensure their full implementation.
5. We also note that the preliminary estimates of resources for the biennium 2010-2011 amounts to \$4,207.6, which before the inclusion of the special political missions, represents a marginal increase of 0.5 percent compared with the approved appropriations and related provisions for the current biennium. Once again, as in previous budgets, compared to the current provisions, activities related to security and human rights are the only areas in the proposed outline where significant growth is being foreseen with provisions for special political missions showing a

significant increase compared to previous biennia.

6. We wish to stress that the estimates are indicative in nature and level of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 may be higher or lower than the preliminary estimates before us today. However, we would like to caution the secretariat not to go back to the mistakes of last budget where we were presented with a zero nominal growth budget in areas of development. We reiterate the great importance of having adequate resources in order for the secretariat to implement the Development Agenda as mandated by the General Assembly. We note the proposed indicative resource change of change of 0.1 per cent under both Part IV and V of the programme budget. We would be interested to know how much of the resource change in these areas is accounted for by technical delayed impact adjustments.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Group would like to emphasize that, in accordance, with the charter, the General Assembly is the only body authorized to consider and approve the budget of the United Nations. The Group would also like to stress that, in accordance with the Charter, the staff of the Organization should be appointed by the Secretary General under regulations established by the General Assembly. The Group would be guided in its approach to the elements under this agenda item by articles 17, 97, 100 and 101 of the charter, Rule 153 of the Rules and Procedure of the General Assembly, and rule 5.9 of the PPBME Rules and Regulation.

8. We also would like to stress that role of the fifth Committee in budgetary and administrative matters should be respected. The Group, therefore, deems it necessary to remind other Main Committees to desist from using the phrase "within existing resources" in their resolutions, as to do so would be in contradiction of rule 153 of the rules of procedure, as well as numerous General Assembly resolutions that have reaffirmed the role of the Fifth Committee. We trust that this will be conveyed in writing to other Main Committees as this Committee has done in the past.

Mr. Chairman,

9. As you are aware, the Group of 77 and China have raise questions to various senior officials in formal and informal meetings in regard of the instruction that the Secretary General gave to all departments and offices to achieve a 2% reduction across the board in preparing for this budget outline. Let me reiterate the position of the Group that this cut cannot be reflected in the budget outline as stated by the Controller in one of the informal meetings. It's about time to recognize that there is only so much that can be done through instituting saving measures and moving funds from one activity to another before the implementation of individual programmes and ultimately the overall work of the Organization suffers.

10. In addition, the Secretary General informed Member States in the previous session that by calling on the Secretariat to absorb the costs of new mandates that arise during the course of a biennium, we are undermining the funding mechanism envisaged when we established the Development Account in 1997.

11. Turning to the level of the contingency fund, we agree with the proposal of the Secretary General to maintain the level of the Contingency Fund at 0,75% of the preliminary estimates.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.