



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. DAYANA RIOS, MINISTER COUNSELLOR IN THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 131: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS - PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET OUTLINE FOR THE BIENNIUM 2016-2017, IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE 69TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 19 November 2014)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 129, in particular on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2016-2017.

2. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank Mr. Johannes Huisman, Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for their introduction of the respective reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the submission of the proposed program budget outline for the biennium 2016-2017, 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 believe that the proposed budget outline should have presented the fullest possible picture of the Organization's estimates of resources for the coming biennium.

4. As we start to discuss this item, the Group recalls with great regret the situation surrounding the approval of the budget outline for the biennium 2014-2015, when Member States were deprived of essential information to take action on the budget outline resolution. Later on, the interpretation of that resolution was regrettably used by the Secretariat to impose cuts on a number of sections of the budget for 2014-2015, on the basis that it represented the guidance of the General Assembly. The G-77 and China will not accept such situation to be repeated and demands full disclosure of mandated activities and transparency on all activities that will have an impact on the budget for 2016-2017.

5. We also note that the preliminary estimates of resources for the biennium 2016-2017 amount to 5,645.2 million USD based on established activities. The Group expresses concern over the total net projected decrease in programme resources of 0.1 per cent or \$3.4 million while there is an increase of 15.1 per cent or \$163.3 million over the estimated biennial provision for special political missions. Once again, as in previous budgets, special political missions show a significant increase compared to previous biennia. The Group is gravely concerned with this imbalance and with the fact that an increasing proportion of the regular budget is devoted for peace and security activities to the detriment of the development activities of the Organization. This trend goes against the priorities established by the General Assembly and may hinder the ability of the Organization to effectively deliver on the post-2015 development agenda.

6. We wish to stress that the estimates are indicative in nature and that the level of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 may be higher than the preliminary estimates before us today. The Group notes that a number of activities under consideration and yet to be considered by the General Assembly would considerably increase the level of the budget. We also reiterate the great importance of having adequate resources in order for the Secretariat to deliver on mandates agreed by Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Group sees with great concern that the Secretary-General has included an overall decrease of US\$ 30 million in the preliminary estimates for 2016-2017 attributable to UMOJA benefits realization. We recall that the General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to elaborate a clear benefit realization plans for the consideration and approval by the GA, but this plan has not yet been presented. In this context, the Group cannot accept decreases in the budget outline attributable to Umoja. Moreover, the G-77 and China conveys its concern with the recent practice to propose reductions in the outline. In our view, they do not represent efficiencies but rather reduction targets with no explanation on how they will be achieved, which means it could have an impact on programmatic activities.

8. Turning to the contingency fund, the Group will request, during our informal consultations, more information on the usage of the fund and on additional requirements approved outside of the contingency fund in previous biennia. In this regard, the G-77 and China opposes a mechanical request for the same level of the contingency fund, with no justification.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The Group of 77 and China is deeply committed to the budgetary process established by Resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. These resolutions laid the technical and political foundations for the work we do, stipulating how the budget will be prepared and under what terms the Fifth Committee will negotiate it. We are therefore concerned with inconsistencies identified by the ACABQ in the presentation of the Secretary-General's report, in particular the incorporation of amounts related to initiatives under consideration by the General Assembly. We also see with much concern the fact that estimates related to UNMEER was not included in the budget outline, as it would allow Member States to have a full picture of preliminary estimates.

Mr. Chairman,

10. 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. We also would like to stress that the role of the Fifth Committee in budgetary and administrative matters should be respected. The Group, therefore, deems it necessary to remind other Main Committees of the General Assembly 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.

11. The Group would like to assure you of our willingness to engage constructively in the deliberations on this agenda item.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.