



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 133: SECOND PERFORMANCE REPORT ON THE PROGRAMME BUDGET BIENNIUM 2012-2013, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 16 December 2013)

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 133, in particular on the Second Performance Report on the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.
2. I would like to thank Ms. Mariana Eugenia Casar, Assistant Secretary-General and Controller for introducing the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/68/628, and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for presentation of the Committee's related report contained in document A/68/656.
3. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the effective and smooth functioning of the Organization. The performance reports are a particularly important benchmark of the proper implementation of the budget process. The Second Performance Report is a critical priority for the Group in this session and we will analyse it in close detail.

Mr Chairman,

4. The Group notes that the anticipated final level of expenditures under the programme budget 2012-2013 amounts to \$5,603.7 million, with a net increase reported under the expenditure section of \$173 million. In closing the budget of the current biennium, the General Assembly has the responsibility of approving the corresponding final appropriation and determining the necessary assessment to cover the legitimate expenditures already incurred by the Organization. The Group expects that all Member States will adopt a responsible approach and not undermine the Organization by withholding approval for amounts already committed in the implementation of approved mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

5. In this biennium, we learned that the decision to defer post-related recosting was used as a means to seek further cuts. Moreover, we see today that the misinterpretation of that decision has been used, in conjunction with the practice of "vacancy management", as justification for the Secretariat to leave vacant posts that have been approved by the General Assembly, in order to meet the illusory target of "absorbing" recosting.
6. The Group of 77 and China notes with concern that this practice has led to an increase in the average vacancy rate during the biennium, in contrast with a recent trend of reduced actual vacancy rates. The Group emphasizes that no post should be kept vacant in order to achieve budgetary savings. Such approach not only undermines the implementation of mandated activities, but also jeopardizes the prerogatives of the General Assembly in allocating resources and defining

the staffing table of the Organization.

7. The Group of 77 and China is of the view that the Organisation's initial limited experience with forward purchasing has been positive. We look forward to hearing more from the Secretariat on how such measures can be enhanced as legitimate ways of seeking positive efficiencies that do not negatively impact on delivery of mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The Group of 77 and China recalls that recosting is an integral part of the budget procedures as established by General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. We recall that recosting has been applied to the budget of the United Nations consistently since the adoption of resolution 41/213. The Group continues to reject any attempt to undermine the compromise achieved more than 20 years ago with regard to the budget procedures in all their aspects, including decision making.

9. In conclusion, Mr Chairman, the Group of 77 and China underlines its readiness to work constructively with you and other delegations on this important agenda item.