



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. LOURDES PEREIRA S., FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF ECUADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS,, ON AGENDA ITEM 134: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR BIENNIUM 2016-2017: LESSONS LEARNED EXERCISE ON THE COORDINATION ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR EBOLA EMERGENCY RESPONSE (UNMEER), AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE FIRST RESUMED PART OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 6 March 2017)

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 134: Programme Budget for Biennium 2016-2017: with particular reference to Lessons Learned Exercise on the Coordination Activities of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER).

2. At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to thank Mr. Patrick Carey, Representative of the Secretary-General, for introducing the reports contained in documents A/70/737 and A/70/737/Corr.1, and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the related report on this agenda item contained in document A/71/810.

Madam Chair,

3. The Group takes note of the report of the Secretary-General which presents the findings and lesson learned, especially on leadership, organization, operational impact and delivery of mandate. We thank also the ACABQ for the useful comments and recommendations that will help the Committee during its deliberations.

Madam Chair,

4. Since the 2014 Ebola outbreak, it became quickly evident that one country alone with limited capacities and resources could not face alone a threat of that dimension which quickly spread across the borders if it was not contained with global efforts. It also became evident that the regional and international organizations in charge of health, in particular the World Health Organization, did not have the relevant mechanisms and resources in place for a rapid response to stem the tide of the crisis. Uncertainty, fear and a lack of capacity and preparedness contributed to an ineffective and delayed response.

Madam Chair,

5. The Group of 77 and China would like, once again, to express its appreciation for the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), the first-ever UN emergency health mission. Despite the serious challenges, the presence of UNMEER played a catalytic role in mobilizing the necessary financial and human resources to scale up the response. The Mission contributed in bolstering national operational response capacity of the three Ebola affected countries.

6. The Group underlines that, the availability of immediate funds in an emergency intervention, flexible enough to meet identified critical gaps is every important and helps build synergies of the global response. To this end, the Group would like to commend the Office of the Special Envoy on Ebola for mobilizing extra-budgetary resources to the Ebola Multi-Partner Trust Fund, the international institutions, in particular WHO, OCHA, the bilateral and multilateral partners, the African Union and sub-regional organizations, the civil society, and many others for their fundamental contributions during the Ebola outbreak.

Madam Chair,

7. The reports under consideration highlight the numerous challenges encountered in the fight against the Ebola virus disease, which include but are not limited to the lack of coordination, initial confusion on responsibility sharing, trained and experienced personnel, inefficiencies in the use of new mechanisms which led to the loss of time, ineffective community engagement, proper logistic coordination, and information on the financial performance of the Mission and on the liquidation and disposal of assets.

8. The Group, particularly underlines that it is important to build upon existing institutional and coordination mechanisms, working with entities already on the ground such as the WHO and the United Nations Country team, the African Union, so as to reduce confusion, especially in the midst of health crises such as the recent Ebola outbreak.

9. The Group also highlights the need to support local actors on the ground rather than assuming responsibility for their tasks, strengthen the capacity at the district level, enhance coordination among different entities, and involve of implementing partners, and the need to avoid duplicative solutions and structures.

10. The Group supports the strengthening of regional organizations in the areas of responding to health crises as they played a key role in raising awareness of the Ebola outbreak as well as mobilizing political and financial support from countries in the region and the continent in solidarity with the affected countries.

Madam Chair,

11. The Group wishes to emphasize that the world is now a big village, where the borders between countries are crossed by millions every day for different reasons, a better life for some, a migration for others due to different factors, including climate change, no country is immune from a disease outbreak, no matter where it emerges.

12. The Group, therefore, notes that the lessons learned will guide the Member States and the entire UN system in dealing with future global health crisis whenever it occurs.

13. The Group stands ready for a quick deliberation on this agenda item.

I thank you.