

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, BY MR. GARFIELD BARNWELL, DELEGATION OF GUYANA, IN EXPLANATION OF VOTE AT THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE ISSUE OF THE DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT UNDER AGENDA ITEM 119 ENTITLED "PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999" (A/54/508)

New York, 29 October 1999

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, in explanation of vote on agenda item 119 entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999".

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the conclusion of the deliberations on the issue of modalities and sustainability of the Development Account. Further, the Group welcomes the conclusion of negotiations on the issue after difficult and lengthy deliberations on the matter. In this process the Group demonstrated a spirit of cooperation and understanding in seeking consensus on this matter and looks forward to the continuation of this spirit in further negotiations in the Fifth Committee.

The Group's understanding of operative paragraph 2 of this resolution is that the cumulative savings achieved as a result of efficiency measures will be transferred to the Development Account section in the budget, with prior approval of the General Assembly, and will form the maintenance base of the budget section relating to the development account for subsequent biennia.

The Group would once again like to reaffirm its position that the operation of the Development Account should be in accordance with the relevant regulations and rules of the Organization since it is part of the regular budget. Further, it must neither be a budget nor a staff reduction exercise.

We would also like to stress that the correlation being sought between the Development Account and efficiency measures is not appropriate. Improved efficiency and effectiveness are essential to strengthen the Organization's capacity to fulfill its role and must not be trivialized. The Group is of the view that arbitrary proposals for savings during the formulation and implementation phases of the budget should be avoided since they can have an adverse impact on programme delivery. Therefore, we would like to reaffirm that the exercise of improving efficiency in the Organization must ensure the full implementation of all mandated programmes and activities.

Mr. President,

Finally, we would like to request the Secretary-General to submit proposals for the use of the funds during this session, as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. The projects approved should be fully implemented in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the Organization and the Rules and Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

Thank you, Mr. President.