

**STATEMENT BY MR. MORTEZA MIRMOHAMMAD (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN), ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2002-2003, IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**New York, 24 December 2001**

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**In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by expressing my profound gratitude to the coordinator, Mr. Eduardo Ramos, our colleague from Portugal for his excellent stewardship, his dedication to the successful outcome of the negotiations, and his tireless efforts which were taken in a balanced manner with full understanding of different positions on the issue, often hard to bridge. His optimism was infectious.

I was positively surprised by the very cooperative and peaceful manner in which we conducted our discussions on this budget (2002-2003). The issue was difficult and contentious as usual and recosting was a problem this time, but the work atmosphere was indeed very encouraging. I have to express my appreciation for all the cooperation and flexibility extended by the European Union, and my distinguished friend Mr. Michel Tilemans from Belgium, our distinguished colleagues from the United States, Japan, CANZ delegations, Russian Federation and all others who have contributed to the successful conclusion of the subject. I am grateful for the constructive and effective role played by Japan. The involvement of Ambassador Kennedy of the United States was timely and very helpful. I was, as were all of us here, impressed by his openness and his positive approach that facilitated our discussions. It was a wonderful experience to find all of us, at the end of the day, members of an extended group belonging to the Committee as a whole, responding to the appeal of the Secretary-General earlier last week to give him the budget he needs to fulfill the mandates given to him by Member States. I believe that the Group of 77 and China tried their best to help him with the kind of budget that is adopted in accordance with the established budgetary procedures based on the resources necessary for the implementation of the mandates provided for the Organization in the Medium-Term Plan.

We were, as a Group, flexible enough to move towards accepting a number of significant reductions in the requested resource sin order to achieve consensus, the most important consideration of the Group of 77 and China in these negotiations, to the extent that they do not affect mandates and priorities all Member States of this Organization agreed to. Consensually, we were cooperative in welcoming a number of initiatives of the Secretary-General and joining a number of requests to him to conduct studies in some areas of work of the Organiation to ensure that duplication does not exist within the Organization and that responsibilities are discharged in an effective, efficient and a streamlined manner. At the same time, we tried to avoid reduction of resources of specific departments without being aware of its implications. We appreciate the understanding of our interlocutors in this regard. We also tried to exempt certain areas of work such as DESA and Regional Commissions, especially in Africa, from some across the board reductions. This is an important priority for the Group. The Group is also concerned about the impact of redeployment of considerable resources from Section 11A on the capacity of UNCTAD to fulfill its mandates for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS and is looking forward to the reports on the consequences of such a redeployment and specific proposals that will retain and strengthen UNCTAD capacity. The Group supports the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for LDCs without affecting the operational capacity of UNCTAD.

Another areas of emphasis to the Group was to treat programme budget implications in accordance with resolution 41/213 and rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. We were of the conviction that some additional posts were needed to support some areas of work of the Organization. We proposed establishment of a post of Ombudsman in the Office of the Secretary-General at the ASG level with the required authority for effective and independent discharge of its responsibilities in the area of Administration of Justice. We trust that this position will be filled by a competent individual with the necessary legal qualifications, and expeditiously.

Mr. Chairman,

During the process, I have tried to coordinated and represent positions of Members of the Group of 77 and China. I appreciate their invaluable assistance and support and I beg their pardon for any shortcoming.

Mr. Chairman,

I have to praise you for your constructive involvement at times the Committee was in need of it to make its way ahead. Your dedication, objectivity and fairness and your leadership was impressive. The Group of 77 and China sincerely thank you and your delegation for your efforts.

I also have to commend all the Secretariat representatives, especially Mr. Sach, Director of the Budget as well as Ambassador Mselle, Chairman of the ACABQ for their hard work and valuable support and advice which were important for delegations to arrive at an informed decision. My thanks and appreciation are also extended to the distinguished Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Satchivi, and Deputy Secretary, Mrs. Benary, known for her diligence and dedication, and other members of the Secretariat of the Committee, as well as conference room and document officers, interpreters, and sound engineers for their hard work, day and night.

Mr. Chairman,

This is my last statement in the Committee on behalf of the Group of 77 and China before I leave. Distinguished Colleagues, it was a pleasure working with you. I wish you the best of luck. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.