

**STATEMENT BY CHIEF ARTHUR C. I. MBANEFO, MFR, AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA AND CHAIRMAN OF GROUP OF 77 ON AGENDA ITEM 97: TRAINING AND RESEARCH, AT THE PLENEARY OF THE 55TH UNGA SESSION**

**New York, 20 December 2000**

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to speak, in explanation of action to be taken, regarding the Report of the Second Committee (A/55/584) on agenda item 97 entitled Training and Research. I am referring to Draft Resolution III, entitled United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), in particular operative paragraph 13 thereof, as recommended by the Second Committee.

Mr. President,

The understanding of the Group of 77 during the negotiations was that the re-classification of the rental rates and maintenance costs sought in paragraph 13 for UNITAR would somewhat improve the current financial status of the institute, at least in the short term, until the issue of rent and maintenance costs paid by UNITAR can be reviewed next year. Indeed, as operative paragraphs 7 and 8 as well as preambular paragraph 7 make clear, the need for such review has become obvious and necessary not only to ensure that UNITAR enjoys parity of treatment with similar United Nations institutions but also to establish the fact that the poor state of its General Fund places a huge, but avoidable, impediment on UNITAR's delivery of its training programmes, free of charge, to all Member States, both developed and developing.

It is in this context that the oral statement of the Secretariat made during the Committee's adoption of its recommended draft resolution III came as a surprise to us all. As may be recalled, that oral statement said, among other things, that the "Secretary-General does not have the discretionary authority to waive the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213, and, hence is not in a position "to re-classify" the rates charged to UNITAR for rent and maintenance costs, unless the General Assembly decides to make an express exception to its resolution 41/213 in regard to recommendation 36". Indeed, the poor financial situation of UNITAR deserves a remedy, which the General Assembly can provide.

Mr. President,

We are keen, however, not to delay or postpone the adoption of the draft resolution III by the General Assembly. We are therefore willing to go along with action on the draft, on the understanding that no action will be taken either on operative paragraph 13 of it or on the oral statement of the Secretariat referred to. We believe that maintaining the current status quo until the fifty-sixth session, through such course of action, will provide all parties an opportunity to discern and design a meaningful solution to the problem of UNITAR. On that understanding, the Group of 77 and China are willing to proceed with the consensus on the draft resolution.

Mr. President,

I would request that this present statement be reflected in the official records of the General Assembly.

I thank you.