



United Nations General Assembly
Fifth Committee

Agenda Item 134: Proposed Programme Budget for the biennium 2012-2013

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(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

1. Since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor in a formal session, I wish to congratulate you on your election to chair this Committee, as well as the other members of the bureau. I can assure you of my delegation's support and constructive participation. I would also like to express my appreciation for the work done by Ambassador Gert Rosenthal, of Guatemala, during his chairmanship in the 65th session.

2. I would like to thank H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for introducing the Proposed Programme Budget for the biennium 2012-2013. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Collén Kelapile, the Chairman of the ACABQ, for introducing the related Committee's report.

3. Brazil would like to associate itself with the statements made by Argentina, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Chile, on behalf of the Rio Group.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The consideration of the regular budget is a crucial time for Member States and the Secretariat. We have the opportunity to examine the programme of work of the United Nations and decide on the level and allocation of financial resources necessary to implement the mandates approved by the intergovernmental bodies. However, before we begin to scrutinize the details of the budget it is of the utmost importance to have a strategic discussion on the role of the regular budget in this Organization.

5. We strongly believe that the United Nations' regular budget must reflect in a balanced manner the Organization's three pillars: peace and security, human rights and development. These three priorities must be considered indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. We cannot agree with the view that peace and security should be financed by assessed contributions, and that human rights and development should be funded by voluntary contributions.

6. Brazil is also convinced of the need to further strengthen the role, capacity, and effectiveness of the United Nations Secretariat in the area of development, including DESA, UNCTAD, the regional commissions and the Development Account, and a greater share of its financing through the regular budget.

7. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, the proposed budget presented to us today does not give due priority to development activities. We are deeply concerned with the reductions proposed in almost all the budget sections strengthened in 2009 on the basis of the report on development-related activities. We are particularly troubled by the proposed abolition of a number of posts in the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), some of which will directly impact programmatic areas.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Brazil is concerned with the current funding arrangements of special political missions. The budget of special political missions, which is integrated into the level of the regular budget,

has increased ten-fold in the past decade. Currently, it constitutes 20% of the regular budget, with the two largest missions, UNAMA and UNAMI, representing half of this amount, or 10% of the budget. This has caused a large distortion to the regular budget to the detriment of other activities, especially in the area of development.

9. The General Assembly has reaffirmed, time and time again, that the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security should be borne in mind in connection with their contributions to the financing of peace and security operations. Therefore, it would make perfect sense to separate the budget of special political missions from the regular budget and to fund them through the peacekeeping scale of assessments.

10. Moreover, it is undeniable that the current arrangements for backstopping special political missions - which are a direct result of the artificial separation from peacekeeping - are cumbersome, duplicative, inefficient, and impair the ability of the Secretariat to timely deploy them on the ground. The entire membership and the Secretariat are paying a hefty price for this situation. It is our duty to tackle this issue as a matter of priority.

Mr. Chairman,

11. In the course of the past decade, we Member States have been asking more and more from the United Nations, which is an evidence of the importance we bestow on the Organization. The increase in the overall level of resources requested for the budget, from US\$ 17,1 billion in 2010-2011 to US\$ 17,8 billion in 2012-2013, is a clear indication of this.

12. However, the budget document before us displays an evident contradiction. Despite the overall increase, cuts are being proposed in the activities funded through assessed contributions. An increase of 7% in the level of voluntary contributions fills the gap between the mandated activities and the resources needed. The cuts proposed therefore represent a movement toward greater dependency on voluntary contributions.

13. This situation is the result of two conflicting trends: a growing need for assessed contributions to finance special political missions and an increasing reliance on extra-budgetary funds for other priority activities. So, on the one hand, the decisions of the Security Council on peace and security issues count on reliable assessed contributions. On the other hand, the equally important mandates approved by the General Assembly, the ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies on development and human rights are left to rely on less predictable extra-budgetary funds.

14. Brazil believes that voluntary contributions are an important source of funding for the Organization. However, they should not replace regular and predictable funds for core activities nor be used to reorient priorities agreed by Member States. We must equip the United Nations with the necessary governance mechanisms to ensure proper oversight and accountability over a budget that is increasingly reliant on voluntary contributions.

Mr. Chairman,

15. In crisis situations, such as the one the world is currently facing, it is common to call for "extraordinary" measures. Political pressure for action means often times we sacrifice quality of analysis for the sake of superficial measures. The result, we fear, are negative unintended consequences for the years to come.

16. We are convinced that the Secretariat can be more efficient and effective in its business, with increased transparency and accountability toward the membership, and we appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard. Nonetheless, we share the concerns expressed by the ACABQ that the cuts proposed were not based on an in-depth analysis of the programmes. As a result, the budget fails to provide sufficient assurances that mandate implementation, particularly on the area of development, will not be adversely impacted by the reduction.

Mr. Chairman,

17. The task in front of us is certainly complex. As the membership is called upon to fulfill its responsibility to finance the activities of the Organization, we have an opportunity to reaffirm with deeds our unwavering commitment to its work. You can count on my delegation's full support to a successful conclusion of this negotiation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

