

**NIGERIAN DELEGATION STATEMENT MADE BY MR. FELIX AYIBANUAH  
DATUOWEL, MINISTER AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 134: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET  
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2012-2013, IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN  
PART OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 28 OCTOBER  
2011**

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would at the outset, like to congratulate you upon your election as the Chairman of the Fifth Committee along with other members of the Bureau. We would like welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, to introduce the Proposed Programme Budget for the biennium 2012-2013 to the Fifth Committee. We also wish to thank Mr Collen Kelapile, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing the Advisory Committee's related report contained in document A/66/7.

First, my delegation is in full agreement with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Cote D'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group on this important agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation appreciates the fact that in an important organization like the United Nations, the budgetary process forms the fulcrum of the delivery of intergovernmental mandates. In that regard, what is allocated and how it is distributed would determine the extent to which set goals would be achieved in the face of contending priorities and challenges. The budget should reflect the strategic focus of the United Nations in the next biennium 2012-2013 on matters of great importance, particularly on the tripod of peace and security, development, and human rights. We therefore would like to see that the resources so deployed to pursue these programmes should enjoy equity and balance. For this reason, my delegation is not particularly comfortable with the current trend where the largest chunk of resources is now allocated to peacekeeping operations to the detriment of development

The global financial crisis that has enveloped the entire world economies has been orchestrated by Member States who are now most vocal in their calls for budget cuts and fiscal discipline at the United Nations. Their cries for the Secretary-General to do more with less would have been convincing if there has been sincerity and objectivity. But that does not seem to be the case, as the emphasis of budget cuts are mostly focused on programmes that would benefit developing economies. Insufficient budgetary allocations have seriously diminished the achievements of programmes earmarked for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a result, there is poverty, hunger and disease across the world, particularly in Africa. Yet resources are wasted on projects that cause misery and death to the human race in some of the Member States that would

want to justify reduction of what in the first instance is inadequate. My delegation would be pleased to listen to the sermons of budget cuts if they are predicated on clear conscience of effective multilateralism and equity, but not those based on injustice and double standards.

Mr. Chairman,

The regular budget should make sufficient resources available for the programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the MDGs. The unilateral directive on 3% cuts on budgetary allocations to programmes lacks intergovernmental legislation. Extending these cuts to programmes that are meant to alleviate the shameful misery and death witnessed on our television screens daily is unconscionable. So the use of coded phrases like "strict fiscal discipline", "add-ons", "efficiency gains" and "most effective and efficient" in the parlance of budgetary process to justify budget cuts for development is flawed. When the UN regular budget is claimed to have made exponential or dramatic growth in the last decade, this has not been juxtaposed with the enormous wealth generated within the same period by the Member States shying away from their responsibilities.

The reform initiatives introduced at the Secretariat as approved by the General Assembly should be seen to address ways and means to realize legislative mandates. But this should not be allowed as a surreptitious weapon to undermine the clearly stated mandates of the General Assembly to execute prioritized development projects. Unnecessary pressures brought to bear on the Secretariat to act in any manners or to take dictations outside the UN resolutions will be resisted. In the same vein, we are calling for the highest standards of accountability, integrity and transparency in the manner the Secretariat discharges its functions. Line managers should at all times uphold the highest sense of responsibility and purpose. The implementation of recommendations by auditing bodies and the ACABQ as endorsed by the General Assembly should be carried out with the desired urgency.

Mr. Chairman,

While we crave for adequate resources for development, we have observed the imbalance in the staff demographic distribution at the UN Secretariat. It is lopsided to the disadvantage of the developing countries and women. And when the abolishment of posts are recommended, it is skewed to favour certain interest groups. These facts have come to light in the deliberation of some other agenda items in the Fifth Committee. Any policy or practice of non-inclusiveness in the recruitment or appointment of UN personnel should be viewed as an anathema of the UN charter. We need to emphasize that the trend is most unhealthy for the spirit of multilateralism and cohesion. No efforts should be spared to bring about urgent equitable geographic representation and gender balance within the UN system. This leads us to once again lend our voice to that of the G - 77 and China, and the African Group to request the Secretary-General to comply with the General Assembly Resolutions 62/236, 63/260 and 64/243 and 65/544 wherein the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA) was established on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2003, by the Secretary-General, in line with General Assembly resolution 57/300 and reaffirmed. The continued failure of the Secretary-General to fill that post is not only detrimental to the UN programme on NEPAD, but is giving room for grave concern.

The UN is desirous to take advantage of the advancement Information Communications Technology (ICT). This has been manifested in diverse areas like IPSAS, conference management, and staff work management. But only recently, this innovation has been extended in the coverage of the plenary meeting of the Fifth Committee. A live web-broadcast coverage was on the plenary of 27 October 2011. It is our hope and suggestion that as the G-77 and China has noted, this practice should be made regular and not for selective preferences to suit the whims or caprices of powerful interest groups. At the same time, the Committee will like to know if it is cost free or could be absorbed within existing resources. All the same, we demand to know the cost implications.

Still on the same issue of innovative introductions based on ICT, my delegation would like to sound a note of caution with the rapidity it is embraced in certain aspects. The paper-smart concept should be approached with universal appraisal to take cognizance of the limitations of some Member States in their levels of development. Such Member States have problems with steady power supplies and backward technological infrastructures. Unless the concept is tailored to carry them along, they would be seriously disadvantaged. Budgetary allocations that would suddenly deprive them of information materials to enable them participate in their intergovernmental negotiations must be avoided.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to request that adequate funding should be made available to firmly establish UN-Women to bring about gender equality, empowerment of women, and education for women and girls. Furthermore, the United Nations Peace-building Commission is undergoing difficulties as a result of inadequate regular budgetary allocations. Recommendations made by the ACABQ to address the unpredictability of secondments and extra-budgetary resources expected at the Commission rests on more resources from the regular budget. We are worried that unless the Commission is well funded, gains made in peacekeeping operations would be lost.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, my delegation is ready to work in a constructive manner with all negotiating Member States in a spirit of that will benefit and advance the goals of the United nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman