



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY MR CRAIG LIM, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT
MISSION OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA
ITEM 134: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
2012 TO 2013, FIFTH COMMITTEE, FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2011**

1 Singapore would like to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency, Mr Ban Ki-moon, for his statement on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012 to 2013. We also thank Mr Collen Kelapile, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for introducing the report of the ACABQ.

Mr Chairman,

2 Two years ago, Singapore delivered a national statement on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010 to 2011. Looking back at those remarks, we note that many things have not changed. The world today is still grappling with serious economic and financial challenges. Calls continue to be made for the United Nations to be more effective and efficient. That said, what also remains unchanged is that the United Nations is still the world's best guarantee for peace and security, development and a whole host of other important issues. No single country or alternative group of countries can play that same role, or even presume to do so. Consequently, it is important that Member States ensure that the United Nations is well placed to deliver on all its mandates, and to turn its goals into reality.

3 To this end, as the Fifth Committee begins its deliberations on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012 to 2013, we as Member States have a responsibility to recognise the investments that need to be made. It is of course easy to be seduced by short-term priorities and concerns, but my delegation believes that all Member States recognise that we are in this for the long run. For this coming biennium, perhaps more than ever, there will be a greater number of urgent and competing demands on limited resources. We will hear calls for priorities to be established, but let us not lose sight of the good that the United Nations can do, and needs of the vast majority of the world's population.

4 In this regard, Singapore firmly believes that the development pillar of the United Nations is a critical component of its mission. Singapore benefited from development assistance during our early years, and we are fully aware of the good that this can bring. There are many other countries and peoples that still need help. While much has been achieved, we note that such efforts have largely been financed through extra-budgetary resources. More can and must be done with respect to the programme budget. The United Nations must be empowered to fulfil the mandates it has been entrusted with. If the true measure of our success is how we provide for the poorest and most vulnerable amongst us, for those who do not have enough, then we still have much to do; particularly in addressing the unique challenges faced by the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States.

Mr Chairman,

5 While funding for development-related activities remains inadequate, my delegation notes that the budgets of Special Political Missions (SPMs) have grown tremendously over the past decade and had reached a level of about US\$1.2 billion for the 2010 to 2011 programme budget. In short, the SPMs component now represents approximately one fifth of the programme budget. This stands in stark contrast to the US\$86 million appropriated in the 2000 to 2001 programme budget. Singapore recognises the need for such missions, but there has been a disproportionate growth in the provisions for SPMs that has led to large distortions in the size of the Regular Budget. This has led to the false impression that the Organisation's Regular Budget has spiralled out of control, when much of that growth can be attributed to SPMs – which are mandated by the United Nations Security Council. It is difficult to justify quibbling incessantly over comparatively small sums of money for priority issues such as development, while the Fifth Committee is so often expected to quickly approve the budgets for these SPMs without making too much of a fuss. This discrepancy clearly needs immediate and urgent correction. We are encouraged that General Assembly resolution 65/259 had requested the Secretary-General to conduct a thorough review of the current funding and backstopping arrangements for SPMs, with a view to identifying alternative solutions. My delegation joins many others in looking forward to the coming deliberations on this particular aspect of this agenda item.

Mr Chairman,

6 Singapore recognises that a symbiotic relationship exists between the United Nations and its Member States. Just as Member States have a responsibility to provide the necessary support and resources to the United Nations, the Organisation itself has an equal responsibility to be fully accountable to its members, not just for the delivery of mandates, but to also ensure that all resources allocated to it are used appropriately in the most effective and efficient manner. It is for this reason that the United Nations should expect close scrutiny of its financial requests, and its subsequent utilisation of these resources.

7 It is probably an understatement to say that the forthcoming discussions on the proposed programme budget will be difficult. However, Singapore is confident that each of us is cognizant of the responsibilities that we shoulder, not just to the Organisation, but also the wider constituency that it serves. We would like to assure you of our constructive participation in the negotiations ahead.

8 Thank you.

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