



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

**Miss Carmel Power
First Counsellor at the European Union Delegation to the United Nations**

66th Session of the General Assembly

Second Resumed Session

Fifth Committee

Cross-Cutting Issues

United Nations

New York

9 May 2012

Check against Delivery

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

The Member States of the European Union would like to thank the Controller, Assistant Secretary-General, Ms Maria Eugenia Casar, and the Under-Secretary General for Field Support, Ms. Ameerah Haq, for introducing the reports of the Secretary-General. We would also like to thank the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Mr. Collen Kelapile, and the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, Ms. Carmen L. Lapointe for introducing their reports.

Mr. Chairman,

As we reaffirmed in our statement at the opening of this second resumed session on 7 May, the Member States of the European Union strongly support peacekeeping as one of the core functions of the United Nations. We note from the Secretary General's report that the overall budget for 2012/13 is projected to come in at around \$7.4bn, a 1.6% decrease against this year's latest projected spend adjusted for the exceptional one-time payment to troop-contributing countries. We note that this decrease also reflects one-off spending that will not recur this year on elections, as well as a decrease in approved troop levels, the consolidation, drawdown and transition of missions and the results of some more effective and cost-efficient mandate implementation.

Such moves towards more effective peacekeeping are welcome. But there are still significant opportunities to reduce the unit cost of peacekeeping. In view of the financial constraints facing all UN Member States, strict budgetary discipline will continue to be necessary to ensure that resources are really needed and used effectively and efficiently. Distinctions have to be made between under-expenditure resulting from other factors, and efficiency gains. We will therefore closely examine the budgets of all the peacekeeping missions, as well as their support functions, to identify sustainable efficiency measures.

Mr Chairman

We continue to support the Global Field Support Strategy as we believe this is the most important ongoing reform related to peacekeeping. We believe that GFSS is an important enabler in making peacekeeping more effective; GFSS should be fully implemented but it also has to prove it is a 'value for money' project. We appreciate the high level of collaboration and consultation between the Secretariat and the Member States on these issues and hope this close collaboration will continue. However, we also believe that GFSS can only reach its full potential and can only yield the necessary results if other reform projects are carried out simultaneously: we believe that the full implementation of IPSAS and UMOJA are crucial if we want GFSS to reach its full potential.

As Member States accountable to our taxpayers, we will carefully scrutinise all items that relate to the cross cutting issues of peacekeeping. Both the Board of Auditors and ACABQ have raised issues for concern in important fields like capital investment, procurement, fuel management, official travel and the use of consultants. We will look into all of these items very carefully.

Mr. Chairman,

Peacekeeping mandates have become more complex. The role of civilian personnel has significantly increased over the last 10 years and we realise that the 24,982 civilian personnel members in peacekeeping are an important feature of a truly global secretariat. We therefore note with appreciation that the impact of recent HR reforms adopted by the GA is reflected in steadily declining turnover rates and the increasing number of staff members in peacekeeping missions that have been regularised through selection processes subject to central review. We should keep in mind that the proposed resources for the 2012-2013 period for civilian personnel in peacekeeping amount to some \$ 1.8billion. It is the opinion of the Member States of the EU that we need closer scrutiny of the civilian component of peacekeeping, including requests for new posts. We believe that it is crucial that the Secretariat – and in particular the leadership team of each mission – look continuously for productivity gains in their civilian staffing structure. In that respect, we note that the Board of Auditors identified 61 international staff posts vacant for 2 or more years.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU Member States share the view expressed by the Secretary-General that one substantiated case of sexual exploitation and abuse is one case too many. We therefore remain concerned about the number of allegations which are reported. We are also concerned about the slow completion of investigations and the lack of progress reported by the Secretary-General with regard to assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate that the Member States of the European Union are ready to engage in constructive discussions with all Member States and look forward to the important negotiations ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman