



**STATEMENT BY MR ANG WEE KEONG, DELEGATE TO THE 67TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 132:
IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
FIFTH COMMITTEE, 18 OCTOBER 2012**

1 Thank you Mr Chairman. I would like to begin by thanking Mr Yukio Takasu, the Under-Secretary-General for Management, for his clear and comprehensive presentation on agenda item 132: Improving the Financial Situation of the UN last Thursday.

2 Singapore is heartened to learn that there has been some improvement in the financial indicators of the UN, and its cash positions are generally projected to be positive and sound at the end of 2012. In particular, we are pleased to hear that the number of Member States that have paid all their regular budget assessments in full as of 11 October this year has increased to 31. This is a notable improvement from 2011, when only 18 Member States were deemed to have made full and timely payments on their assessed contributions. The level of outstanding payments to Member States is also projected to fall to an estimated \$512 million by the end of 2012, a decrease of US\$17 million from one year earlier. These trends are encouraging. Singapore applauds all the Member States that have made a concerted effort to meet their financial obligations to the UN in full and on time, notwithstanding the financial constraints that some of them may face back home in view of the uncertain global economic conditions.

3 That said, we note with concern that a significant amount of assessments continues to remain unpaid, particularly in the regular budget category. Unfortunately, this is familiar news to all of us. While Singapore fully understands that some Member States face genuine difficulties in meeting their financial obligations to the UN and paying their arrears on time, these countries do not account for a significant share of the UN's overall budget. Instead, as we saw from USG Yukio Takasu's presentation last week, a large proportion of the unpaid dues are owed by one major contributor.

4 My delegation reiterates that Member States are duty-bound under the United Nations Charter to meet all their financial obligations on time and without conditions. As my delegation has stressed over the years, the deliberate

withholding of payments by some members is not only short-sighted and irresponsible, but also compromises the financial standing of the UN. We urge all Member States to make their assessed contributions fully, promptly and without pre-conditions, so as to help bring the UN back to greater financial stability and sustainability.

5 Even as we encourage all Member States to fulfil their basic responsibilities to the UN, the UN also needs to recognise that it similarly needs to strengthen its accountability to Member States and demonstrate its ability to manage the financial resources that it has been entrusted with more effectively. After all, the UN needs to answer to Member States the same way that Member States need to be fully accountable to their taxpayers back home. This point cannot be overstated, particularly at a time when many countries all over the world are tightening their belts and adopting tough austerity measures in these challenging economic times. In this regard, the UN has to earn the confidence of Member States by being more transparent and consultative in the way it works, and providing clear, complete and timely information to all Member States. Most importantly, the Secretariat needs to exercise greater fiscal prudence and discipline, and demonstrate its commitment to build a strong, effective and results-oriented organisation. Only then can we eliminate the mistrust and suspicion that have built up between the UN and its Member States, that have been impeding both sides from working together in a more cohesive and constructive manner to fulfil the mission of the UN.

Mr Chairman,

6 The challenges facing the world today are becoming increasingly complex and unpredictable. The UN, as the only multilateral organisation in the world with global membership and universal legitimacy, is best placed to deal with many of the challenges that all Member States are facing collectively. However, the UN cannot fulfil this mandate unless it is provided with the necessary resources in a timely and consistent manner. At the same time, the UN cannot demand greater commitment from Member States without getting its house in order and strengthening its accountability, transparency and ability to deliver results. Singapore urges all Member States to meet their financial obligations as inscribed in the United Nations Charter, and looks forward to working closely with the Secretariat and all Member States to achieve our common goal of building a UN that is efficient, effective and responsive to the challenges of the world.

7 Thank you.