



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. Chairman,

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

The acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Iceland+, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Albania, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, we would like to congratulate you upon your election as Chairman of the Fifth Committee together with the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that with your experience and under your leadership negotiations within the Fifth Committee will reach a fruitful conclusion. We are also pleased to be able to draw on the extensive experience of the Secretariat of the Committee, as well as on that of the other Secretariat officials and of the ACABQ, whose contribution is crucial for the conclusion of our programme of work.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat for organising briefings in the early days of this session. It will help provide Committee members with useful information regarding the various issues before them and will save precious time during discussions about these agenda items. In this regard, I would like to thank Mr Yukio Takasu, Under-Secretary-General for Management, in advance for his presentation later this morning.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Mr. Chairman,

We have noted that the programme of work will conclude on 14 December. We believe that we should aspire to conclude our work by that deadline, but we are concerned that even at this early stage many important items – including human resources and the budget outline - are already scheduled to be introduced late or even very late in the session. In this respect, we note this continuing trend of late submission of reports, sometimes beyond the scheduled end of the Committee's sessions. We would like to reiterate the important impact of timely submission of all required documentation in all official languages. The quality and speed of our discussions depends on this.

Mr. Chairman,

We have a number of important and complex issues on our agenda this session. With regard to the work ahead of us, we would particularly like to highlight the following:

First, with regard to the current 2012-13 Programme Budget, the EU Member States would like to reiterate our long-standing position that all measures need to be taken to avoid a piecemeal approach that substantially increases an already agreed Programme Budget. In this regard, we continue to believe that the current practice of re-costing is no longer sustainable and that we need to explore alternatives in order to make the budget even more transparent and predictable. Given the difficult economic and financial circumstances, business as usual is no longer an option.

We recall that last December we adopted a budget for 2012-13 of \$5.152 bn. The EU Member States firmly believe this should be adhered to. We are therefore concerned to learn that the Secretariat may propose increases to the regular budget which inter alia, refer to re-costing. We would like to recall that our approval of the budget was based on the understanding that these costs were to be absorbed.

We ask the Secretary General to prioritise funding requests and identify better ways to work and deliver. We recall the commitment of the Secretary General, made when addressing the General Assembly on 24 December, to instruct managers to continue to find new ways to make the best of precious resources and to return to the General Assembly in one year with further savings. We want to ensure that resources are used in the most effective and efficient way. In this current extremely difficult economic climate which affects all Members of the United Nations, it is more important than ever to apply the same strict budgetary discipline to UN budgets that Member States are applying themselves. We will therefore continue to examine carefully how the UN Regular budget is spent and how it is accounted for.

The exercise already underway to prepare the budget outline for the 2014-15 biennium is of utmost importance for this organisation. It should enable a true assessment of resource needs, not simply additions to the current budget which effectively result in automatic budget growth. The EU Member States also recall the importance of presenting reform proposals for the UN budget process so as to achieve greater discipline, transparency and accountability.

Mr Chairman,

It remains a priority objective of the EU Member States to ensure that the scale of assessments reflects a more equitable and balanced distribution of the financial responsibilities among the Member States according to their capacity to pay, and to safeguard the financial sustainability of the Organisation. We are ready to engage in discussion with the Member States of all groups to achieve this goal. We will elaborate on our position in our statement during the general discussion of this item tomorrow.

Mr Chairman,

The EU Member States have long been staunch supporters of Human Resources Management reform. Important progress has been made in recent years and we will have further significant proposals before us this session, including on mobility where we have long called for an ambitious approach. Human Resources reforms cannot be achieved overnight and the effects of every new reform proposal also need to be measured in terms of what is possible from a

budgetary perspective. It goes without saying that no concept can be approved without an explanation of likely financial implications. We also need to ensure that the full benefits of previous reforms are realised. We are aware of the expectations of the United Nations personnel - the most important asset of this Organisation - for the completion of the HRM reform, and we look forward to the briefing of ASG Catherine Pollard. I would also like to take this opportunity to honour those who have given their life for the Organisation during the past year

Mr Chairman,

The EU Member States will continue to support management reform processes within the broader context of the Organisation. In addition to HRM reform mentioned above, UMOJA and Enterprise Resource Planning, ICT and other initiatives contribute to modernising the Organisation and enable it to work more effectively and efficiently in order to tackle the challenges of the 21st century. EU Member States note with satisfaction the strengthened governance structure of UMOJA and believe that it will be crucial to define the right level of ambition for the business re-engineering process to make UMOJA a success. We are looking forward to considering progress in our forthcoming discussions in this Committee and will pay special attention to the proposed revised budget requirements.

Mr Chairman,

The EU Member States have supported the Capital Master Plan and its mission to manage the historic and much-needed renovation of UNHQ from the beginning. The GA has continuously reaffirmed the importance of executing this project on time and within budget, in a transparent and accountable manner. We expect the Secretariat to continue seizing opportunities presented by the current economic climate to lower the costs of contracts and operations with the aim of absorbing add-ons, while still ensuring its quality.

Mr Chairman,

The EU Member States also welcome the opportunity to discuss Special Political Missions in this session. We will continue to scrutinise their budgets with our usual close attention. In order to do so, we request that the documents be submitted as soon as possible. We also recognise the

importance of effective and efficient support arrangements for the Missions, while restating our firm rejection of anything that may lead to moving them away from the Regular Budget scale.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, allow me to make clear the wish of the EU Member States to work with you and all members of the Fifth Committee in a spirit of constructive cooperation, consensus and collegiality in order to allow us to understand the views and concerns of each other as we proceed, and so that we can reach tangible results at the end of the main part of the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.