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Agenda item 132
Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by

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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I have the honour to present the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates for the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 in relation to the requirements of the Office of the Special Envoy on Ebola and the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response or UNMEER, contained in the document A/69/842 prepared pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 69/262.

When you last convened on this issue several months ago, the outbreak was still gaining ground, outpacing the response in many areas, and the world was coming to terms with an unprecedented outbreak of Ebola, which has now reported nearly 27,000 cases and more than 11,000 deaths in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to date.

UNMEER, the first-ever emergency health mission, was deployed in recognition of the grave threat that Ebola posed to the region and beyond and aimed to coordinate and scale up the response in support of nationally-led efforts. UNMEER, as a temporary crisis management mechanism, was intended to cease to operate once the Ebola outbreak was contained and when the national governments of those countries, with continued UN system support, felt sufficiently capable of transitioning into routine Ebola prevention and response activities.

Allow me to take a moment to take stock of where we are. As we meet today, more than eight months since the General Assembly welcomed the establishment of UNMEER, we have made considerable strides towards reaching that critical transition juncture. This remarkable turnaround was achieved through harnessing the strengths of the UN system, through UNMEER, and other national and international partners.

2015 has seen an overall significant decline in the number of new Ebola cases in the three affected countries. Liberia, once the worst affected country, was declared Ebola-free on 9 May. The geographic dispersal of the outbreak has shrunk considerably to a narrow belt along coastal Guinea and Sierra Leone. Weekly case totals declined to single digits in both countries in the past month; however, over the past fortnight, we saw a disconcerting increase in cases, particularly in Guinea, and in prefectures that had not previously seen cases.

Amidst the tremendous progress that has taken place, the UN system has begun to plan for what comes after UNMEER. Careful planning has commenced to ensure the coordinated and seamless transition of functions, capacities and assets from UNMEER to UN country team and national partners. UNMEER's transition timeline has progressed, on schedule, with the closure of the Mali office on 31 March and the Liberia office on 30 April; meanwhile, Accra headquarters was significantly downsized to a light footprint and will be further reduced in the coming month. The SRSG maintains a roving presence between the affected countries to ensure a regional perspective on the outbreak and to continue to ensure unity of purpose and clear operational focus among all responders ahead of the rainy season. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Ebola and WHO continue to provide the strategic and technical direction, respectively, on getting to and remaining at a resilient zero cases. The sustained support of Member States in this last mile of the response to finish the job is essential. The UN country teams, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinators, have taken the lead in preparing for the post-Ebola recovery phase. The UN agencies, funds and programmes are also preparing to assume several of UNMEER's essential functions, such as logistics, field crisis management and information management, to sustain the response effort ahead of the Mission's transition.

Throughout this transition, the Special Envoy on Ebola will maintain a dedicated and critical focus on mobilizing the funds needed to ensure that the UN agencies, funds and programmes are equipped with the resources to support the vigilance necessary to reach and maintain a resilient zero, as well as to play the critical role of bridging efforts to the recovery phase. It is foreseen that the Special Envoy on Ebola will need to carry out these functions until 31 December 2015.

The collective investments of the communities, the governments, and regional and international stakeholders, including the membership of this body, are too great to allow for the progress we have achieved thus far to be rolled back. On behalf of the Secretary-General, we count on your continued stewardship to ensure that we finish the job and help the affected countries get to and stay at a resilient zero cases.

The revised estimates for the Office of Special Envoy and UNMEER as well as the related backstopping requirements at Headquarters presently before the Committee, amount to \$88.1 million (net of staff assessment) for the period from 19 September 2014 to 31 December 2015 [under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, as well as for backstopping support, under sections 5, Peacekeeping operations, 8, Legal affairs, 29B, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, 29C, Office of Human Resources Management, 29D, Office of Central Support Services, and 34, Safety and security]

Of this amount, \$81.9 million provides for field-level support to the Ebola-affected countries, regional and sub-regional organizations, upon request, and other implementing partners, including non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The proposal also includes some positions at the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe.

The Office of the Special Envoy, comprised of 11 positions following the merger with the previous Ebola Response Liaison Office, continues to support the strategic coordination, advocacy and resource mobilisation of the Ebola response across United Nations and non-United Nations stakeholders. Once UNMEER draws down by September 2015 and hands over operations to the UN country teams, the Office of the Special Envoy will continue to provide strategic guidance to support the last mile of the response, as well as ensuring strategic coherence in the transition to early recovery. The resources for the office of the Special Envoy amount to \$2.7 million for the period until 31 December 2015.

An amount of \$3.5 million is requested for the financing of 25 positions for varying duration, equivalent of 131.5 work-months, for backstopping support at the Headquarters for the Department of Field Support, Office of Legal Affairs, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Medical Services Division under Office of Human Resources Management, Office of Central Support Services and the Department of Safety and Security for a period until September 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

Now I would like to turn to the next set of reports of the Secretary-General contained in A/69/363/Add.6, Add.7 and Add.8. These reports contain the estimates for the Panel of Experts on South Sudan, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and additional resources for 2015 for United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi (MENUM). The total requirements for 2015 for these special political missions amount to \$237.1 million (net of staff assessment).

The Panel of Experts on South Sudan was established by Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) to oversee an assets freeze and a travel ban imposed on individuals or entities designated by the Council as engaging in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security and stability in South Sudan and to provide information relevant to the potential designation of such individuals and entities. The resource requirements for the Panel amounting to \$947,500 cover the cost of three positions, fees and travel of experts, travel of staff and other operational requirements for 8 months from 1 May to 31 December 2015.

With regard to UNSMIL, as a result of the uncertain political situation, lack of effective governance and deteriorating security conditions in Libya and pending clarity on its operations, an interim-funding requirement of \$31.4 million for the first six months of 2015 was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/262 in lieu of a comprehensive 12-month budget. The current proposal of \$48.1 million for the entire period of 2015 is based on the recommendations of a recently conducted strategic assessment of the Organization's presence in Libya (S/2015/113), noted by the Security Council in its resolution 2213 (2015).

The strategic assessment recommends UNSMIL to focus its activities on key priorities and to establish a small, defensible and continuous footprint inside Libya, in partnership with United Nations Country Team (UNCT); and to operate at the strategic level while handing over most programmatic activities to the UNCT. The resource requirements for 2015 reflect a decrease of \$21.3 million or 30.7 per cent as compared to the approved budget of 2014 and a decrease of 179 positions from the previously authorized 384 positions. Since the evacuation of July 2014, the

mission has been operating and would continue to operate from Tunis to implement its mandate with up to 30 United Nations personnel deployed on a rotational basis depending on the needs.

The mission would need dedicated aviation support to facilitate the United Nations to travel in and out of Tripoli, and to the East, West and South of the Country to assist in maintaining and facilitating security and services in those areas and to provide effective, efficient and timely logistics. Therefore, the current proposal includes the provision of two aircrafts and an establishment of Air Operations and Movement Control Section pending resumption of commercial alternatives or the return of the Mission to Libya.

An additional \$65,300 is required for MENUB as a result of an assessment by the Department of Safety and Security of the security situation in Burundi. This amount is proposed for the financing of two positions of National Officers as Security Officers for the United Nations compound in Bujumbura. With the additional resources, the revised resources for MENUB for 2015 would amount to \$11,763,200 and include 90 positions.

Similar to UNSMIL, given the uncertainty surrounding the political and security transition in Afghanistan in 2014, an interim-funding of \$93.5 million for the first six months of 2015 was approved for UNAMA by General Assembly resolution 69/262. It was followed by a review and comprehensive budget proposal for the full period of 2015.

The bulk of the international community is scheduled to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2015. United Nations support will therefore be critical as underlined by the Security Council in its latest resolution 2210 (2015). The core mandate of UNAMA remains unchanged and it will continue to focus its work on good offices, prioritizing peace and reconciliation, electoral support, the promotion of human rights and human rights advocacy as well as donor coordination. No further significant investment is required for 2015 in construction of major offices and staff accommodation facilities, upgrading and overhauling of communications and information technology equipment, procurement of armoured vehicles or security-related major upgrading works. However, security of staff and assets will continue to remain a priority. The current proposal amounts to \$188.0 million, a decrease of \$3.4 million or 1.8 per cent as compared to the approved budget for 2014, and reflects 1,680 positions, a net reduction of 10 positions as compared to the approved staffing for 2014.

Taking into account the amount already appropriated, it is requested that an additional amount of \$94,006,100 be appropriated under section 3, Political affairs, and \$8,777,200 under Section 36, Staff assessment, for the Panel of Experts on South Sudan, UNSMIL, MENUB and UNAMA.

Thank you, **Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Members of the Committee,**