



General Assembly
Seventieth Session

8 December 2015

Fifth Committee

Special Political Missions

Statement by Norway and Switzerland
Delivered by H.E Geir O. Pedersen
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

Mr. Chairman

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Norway and Switzerland on the very important topic of Special Political Missions.

Since it is the first time that I am taking the floor in the 5th Committee during this session, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election, Mr. Chairman. I am confident that you will be guiding this session to a successful conclusion. I would also like to thank the Controller, Mrs. Bettina Bartsiotas, for introducing the Secretary-General's chapeau report on Special Political Missions and the Chair of the ACABQ, Mr. Carlos Rúa Massieu, for introducing its related report.

(Check against delivery)

Special Political Missions represent a broad and diverse spectrum of peace operations that have become indispensable tools of the UN for the political settlement of conflicts, conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. The number and complexity of these missions have grown considerably, as have the conflicts that they are tackling. Their budget has increased exponentially over the last fifteen years so that today 36 missions make up over 20% of the UN regular budget.

As these missions are facing increasingly challenging situations on the ground, we regret that the Secretariat still has not been equipped with adequate tools for the funding and backstopping of these missions. The consideration of options to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of Special Political Missions, to enhance transparency and accountability, avoid duplication, and facilitate oversight has been deferred every year since 2011. This is unfortunate and unsustainable.

There is an urgent need to give the Secretariat the proper tools to do their job and for these missions to be as effective as possible. Flexible access to funds for backstopping and annual appropriations is essential to address the multiple and developing mandates of each mission.

We are confident that this time an outcome is within reach. Both the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations and the Advisory Group of Experts for the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture have recommended the adoption of the four recommendations of the ACABQ's report of 2011 on the budgeting and accounting for these missions, start-up funding, strategic deployment stocks, and backstopping.

We continue to believe that these four recommendations form a good basis to reach an outcome. Yet we are open to alternative proposals. That being said, we stress the fact that

the volatility of missions' resource requirements due to shifting mandates is difficult to reconcile with a program budget designed for predictable resource allocation.

In these times of conflict, the need for the good offices, prevention and mediation role of the United Nations is greater than ever before, as evidenced by the UN's work in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, and the special envoys for the Sahel, Sudan and South Sudan, to mention a few examples. It is necessary to invest more in political solutions. And we should give the UN the most effective tools for the Secretariat to fulfill the mandates we have entrusted it with.

Mr. Chairman, we have taken this opportunity to raise the issue of funding and backstopping of Special Political Missions once again to underline the urgency of the situation. We hope that the 70th session will be the one that we will finally reach a successful outcome.

Thank you.