

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
BY MR. JUSTIN KISOKA, MINISTER COUNSELOR AT THE PERMANENT
MISSION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON AGENDA ITEM 134: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
2016-2017 AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE
SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
[New York, 12 October, 2015]**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to thank H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, for his remarks to the Committee this morning. We would like to assure you that, our Group will take his advise into account as we consider a number of agenda items in this session.

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 134, entitled proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

At the outset, the African Group would like to thank H.E Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General for the presentation of the proposed programme budget for biennium 2016-2017. The Group would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Inspector Gerard Biraud of the Joint Inspection Unit as well as Ken Herman, Senior Advisor on Information Management Policy Coordination with the Chief Executives Board for Coordination for introducing the respective reports.

The Group aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Republic of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and has a few additional remarks to make.

Mr. Chairman,

Consideration of the programme budget proposal is one of the top priorities of the African Group during this session. The Group continues to believe that, the budget proposal is not a simple financial tool to account for resources of the organization, but it is an important political instrument that reflects the strategic vision of the Secretary-General in delivering the mandates and priorities of the organization, as decided by the member states. The budget document is above all, an accountability tool and a barometer to test how effective the Organization is carrying out its activities in the interest of the populations living on earth.

In this regard, the Group reaffirms its long-standing attachment on the principle that the proposed budget should reflect resource level commensurate with mandates for their full, timely, efficient and effective implementation.

As the global leaders have just adopted the additional new mandates on Sustainable Development Goals as well as Financing for Development the African Group would like to recall that the world is committed again to focusing on the development agenda-including continuing to pay its close attention to Africa's - development as part of the eight priorities of the Organization including for the proposed programme budget for biennium 2016-2017. The Group will be interested to learn in detail on how the budget proposal is designed to address Africa challenges including new development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the proposed programme budget before the Committee, which is at the level of US\$ 5.57 billion, the African Group is deeply concerned on the continued unjustifiable across-the-board resource reduction which may jeopardize mandate delivery including those related to areas of our key interests-such as development. The Group is highly concerned on the approach of negative budget growth that does not take into account the 'real changes' and additional mandated responsibilities to the Organization.

Specifically, the Group is deeply concerned on the unjustifiable reductions on the number of post and non-post resources in important areas including development for Africa; maintenance of international peace and security; effective co-ordination and humanitarian assistance; disarmament and drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism. The Group will seek specific clarification on how mandates in these areas are going to be implemented with such reduction of resources and increased challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

As we consider the budget proposal before us, the African Group will carefully scrutinize all the budget sections and elements with a view to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to efficiently and effectively implement the given mandates. With the help of the observations by oversight bodies and the Advisory Committee, the Group will also be identifying wastage and inefficiencies with the aim of proposing re-directing the resources to developmental and other most needed priorities. We will focus our examination on among others, the following areas as they are connected to Africa's programmes:-

- Political affairs- including elements of disarmament, peacekeeping operations, mediation and conflict prevention;
- International co-operation for development- including United Nations support for Africa's development agenda, least developing countries,

land locked developing states and small island developing states; trade and development; international drug controls, crime and terrorism prevention; and women empowerment,

- Regional co-operation in the areas of economic and social development including support to the regional economic integration in Africa.
- Implementation of capital projects in particular at the Economic Commission for Africa and United Nations Office in Geneva, *the Strategic Heritage Plan*;

The African Group will also be interested to learn how the implementation of the important forgotten mandate related to financing of Program of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, has been factored in the current proposal in line with a number of General Assembly mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

As we recognize the importance of staff as an important asset to the organization, the Group will carefully examine all the proposal related to staff changes including proposed abolishment of many posts at junior level at the expense of unjustifiable introduction and reclassification to the senior posts as well as establishment of new structures and the related implication to the mandate delivery.

The Group will also be interested to learn from the Secretary-General on the reasons for delay in the recruitment of the head of the United Nations Office at the African Union and the impact of such a situation on the delivery of the mandates of this important Office.

Mr. Chairman,

It is also our expectation that, the proposal for other newly established mandates and those to be adopted at later stage will be presented to the Member States for consideration in line with established budgetary procedures.

In conclusion, the African Group would like to underline its long-standing attachment to the agreed budgetary process and to the principles of the budget methodology, and calls on the Secretary-General to strictly abide by the agreed principle that no changes to the established budget methodology, procedures and practices or the financial rules and regulations be implemented without prior review and approval by Member States.

We would like to assure you, of our commitment to work constructively with you and all Member States to find an agreement on this very important agenda item-in a timely manner.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.