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(as delivered)

Statement by Ms. Nobuko Iwatani
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

On agenda item 133: Review of efficiency
of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations
Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2018-2019

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Thank you, Mme. Chairwoman,

At the outset, I wish to thank Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant Secretary-General, Controller, OPPBA, for introducing the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2018-2019, and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for introducing the report of ACABQ on this matter.

Mme. Chairwoman,

Although the Committee needs further updates in order to conclude this matter, I am making a small remark.

My delegation regrets that this proposed budget outline is being introduced so late into this session of this Committee, even as we still have quite a large number of reports yet to be introduced, as the remaining time officially allocated to this Committee is only one week. This leaves very little time for the Committee to finish its work, and my delegation wonders if the Committee can really give meaningful consideration to this matter.

The Member States in this room, including my delegation, have repeatedly expressed their concerns about the practice of merely extending the current budget for the following biennium, and have further stated the need to go beyond incremental budgeting. Nevertheless, the proposal before us seems perfectly unchanged in both methodology and format, on which the ACABQ has made quite similar observation as before. My delegation shares the concern raised by the ACABQ regarding the need to clearly distinguish between estimates in support of mandated activities from estimates relating to other

activities or initiatives that have yet to be considered by the Assembly, as well as the lack of consistency with respect to the presentation of the document.

In this connection, my delegation recalls that it has made some remarks concerning the irregular circumstances or inconsistencies in terms of the issuance of oral statements on programme budget implications upon the adoption of draft resolutions.

My delegation believes that the purpose of the provisions of the resolutions, rules and regulations concerning the handling of draft resolutions involving the financial implications, is to ensure that the conditions necessary for the Member States, who will be paying assessments once such resolutions are adopted, to make informed decisions are place in a timely manner. It believes that prerogatives of the Fifth Committee in budgetary and administrative matter do not mean that other Committee should be left without information about the impact of their decision. My delegation will take this aspect into consideration when examining the overall level, including elements of add-ons, or Annex II - particularly ECOSOC revised estimates as well as the financial implications arising from GA resolutions - in the course of our consideration on the preliminary estimate in the informal consultations.

While taking note that benefit of Umoja is reflected in the preliminary estimate for 2018-2019, my delegation wishes to see more initiatives to seek further efficiencies and savings, and to do more with less. In this regard, we will pay particularly close attention to the consideration of the items related to management reforms.

Regarding the proposal to consolidate the statements on programme budget implications, my delegation concurs with the ACABQ who recommended against it. We could not find concrete merit of the proposal on the side of the Member States. Strict adherence to the existing rules and timely submission of documentation would serve our purpose far better.

Finally, Mme. Chairwoman,

My delegation supports the proposal by the Secretary-General on the size of the contingency fund, which the ACABQ recommended to approve.

Before concluding, let me assure you Mme. Chairwoman that my delegation will constructively participate in the negotiations on this important issue.

I thank you Mme. Chairwoman.