



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY MS. SIRITHON WAIRATPANIJ, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF
THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 133: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF
THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS - PROPOSED
PROGRAMME BUDGET OUTLINE FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019, DURING THE MAIN PART OF
THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIFTH COMMITTEE
(New York, 2 December 2016)**

Madam Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 133, in particular on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2018-2019.
2. The Group of 77 and China wish to thank Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant Secretary-General, Controller, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General as contained in document A/71/428, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee as contained in document A/71/634.

Madam Chairperson,

3. The Group of 77 and China stress that the proposed budget outline should provide the fullest possible picture of the Organization's estimates of resources for the forthcoming biennium. According to Annex I of the General Assembly resolution 41/213, the budget outline provides Member States with a preliminary indication of the resources required in the coming biennium and, once adopted, will form the basis of the budget preparations of the Secretary-General. Consequently, the Group invites the Committee to approach this item within that scope.
4. We wish to underline that the estimates are indicative of the level of the future proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 and note that a number of activities are under consideration and/or yet to be considered by the General Assembly, which may result in an increase in the level of the budget. We also reiterate the great importance of having adequate resources in order for the Secretariat to deliver on mandates agreed by Member States.
5. The Group takes note of the preliminary estimates indicating a budget outline level of \$5,429.9 million for the biennium 2018-2019, while highlighting that this amount is subject to further updates to be provided as supplementary information. Thus, the Group requests that such updates be provided at the earliest possible date so as to conclude this agenda item in due time.

Madam Chairperson,

6. The Group of 77 and China reiterate its concern over the preliminary estimates in respect to special political missions in the amount of \$1,124.4 million for the biennium, which still represents more than 20 per cent of the total regular budget resources. The Group continues to be concerned with this imbalance and with the fact that an increasing proportion of the regular budget is devoted for peace and security activities which may have adverse impact on the funding for development activities of the Organization. This trend goes against the priorities established by the General Assembly and may hinder the ability of the Organization to effectively deliver its mandates particularly in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

7. The Group stresses that resources provided in the budget outline are included for the implementation of existing and forthcoming Member States mandates in line with the eight priority areas set out in the plan outline of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019. Thus, the Group agrees with the ACABQ's comments on the inconsistencies with respect to the presentation of the document, affecting its clarity and the transparency of the calculation of the budget outline level and the resource changes between biennia.

8. Regarding the projected Umoja benefits realization in the amount of \$27.8 million for the biennium 2018-2019, the Group concurs with the ACABQ that the figure is still pending detail analysis of the total costs and benefits of the project. In addition, the resource estimates in relation to Umoja could be impacted as a result of the consideration by the General Assembly on this issue. Therefore, the Group finds it inappropriate, at this stage, to accept the decreases attributable to Umoja, in the budget outline.

9. The Group takes note of the projected requirements for the Global Service Delivery Model (GSDM) related to the project management team in the amount of \$512,600. It must be pointed out that the inclusion of a detailed proposal for GSDM and related resource in the context of the budget proposal for 2018-2019 will be subject to the consideration and decision of the General Assembly on this matter at the current session.

Madam Chairperson,

10. The Group of 77 and China remain deeply concerned over the recent practice to propose reductions of resource level in the budget outline. In our view, they do not represent efficiencies but rather reductions of achievable targets, with no clear explanation on how they will otherwise be completed, and could entail a negative impact on programmatic activities. This is an issue the Group intends to closely follow, bearing in mind previous observations, comments and recommendations of the ACABQ and those of the Board of Auditors.

11. The Group is fully committed to the budgetary process established by General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. These resolutions laid the technical and political foundations for the work we do. In particular, they provide guidance as to how the budget is prepared and under what terms the Fifth Committee negotiates it. In this respect, the inconsistencies identified by the ACABQ in the presentation of the Secretary-General's report are among main concerns of the Group.

Madam Chairperson,

12. The Group does not agree with the proposed consolidation of statements on programme budget implications (PBIs) of draft resolutions. This will not only unnecessarily delay the work of the General Assembly, but also would not benefit the work of the Fifth Committee.

13. The Group would like to emphasize that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly is the only body authorized to consider and approve the budget of the United Nations. We also would like to stress that the role of the Fifth Committee in budgetary and administrative matters should be respected. The Group, therefore, deems it necessary to remind other Main Committees of the General Assembly to desist from interfering with these prerogatives of the Fifth Committee. We trust that this will be conveyed in writing to other Main Committees as this Committee has done in the past.

14. In conclusion, the Group would like to assure you of our willingness to engage constructively in the deliberations on this agenda item.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.